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PORTRAIT BY DOEBLER 1791

THE HERITAGE OF KANT

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AND
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FOREWORD

NO apology need be made for a new book on Kant, particularly when it attempts (as this one does) a reassessment of the value of Kant's thought for philosophy today. In the strict sense of the term there are probably no "Kantians" alive at the present. Kant's most devoted disciples have ever been ultracritical of his doctrines; his writings from the first have invited exegesis rather than indiscriminate acceptance. But the fact remains that no philosopher has exerted a wider influence than Kant upon current philosophic opinion. He was successful not merely in formulating many of the great philosophic problems of the present, but in defining the kind of approach to them which is congenial to the modern temper and which, when generalized, reveals itself as a theme upon which many and significant special variations are being played. In a very real sense, the Critical Philosophy sets the stage for modern philosophical inquiry.

This, at any rate, is the conviction of the contributors to this volume. Most of them would concede, I think, that Kantianism in the letter is dead. Few, if any, for example, would repose the same degree of confidence in the transcendental method that Kant did, and few would claim either so much for science or so little for metaphysics as is claimed in the *Analytic* and the *Dialectic*. Nor does this scepticism stop with the doctrines of the first *Critique*. As the essays themselves show, the general agreement would be that Kant's attempted reduction of our moral and aesthetic responses to a sense of obligation in the one case and a feeling for form in the other constitutes an oversimplification, travestyng the rich complexity of these two types of normative experience. Yet all of us, I believe, would still want to insist that what Kant has said about these matters remains fresh and pertinent. For each essay, although written from a distinctively modern perspective and distrustful of the Kantian argument in its details, testifies ultimately to the great illumination Kant has shed upon some phase of man's experience. This is true even when the author is

critical of Kant's more fundamental contentions; for Kant, to a far greater extent perhaps than any other philosopher, teaches by his very errors.

But it is scarcely necessary to labor the point. The individual reader himself must be the final judge of the success of our enterprise; he alone can decide whether we have demonstrated the continued vitality of the Critical analysis. If, however, we have at least been able to stimulate anew the perennial interest in Kant's philosophy, we believe that this book will not have been written in vain.

A word should be added regarding the circumstances under which the book has been written and to explain my own rôle as editor. Actual work on the book was started by Professor George Tapley Whitney at the time of his retirement from the Princeton Faculty in 1936, and the objective he then had in mind is best expressed in the opening paragraph of a preface he had begun to draft shortly before his death:

This collection of essays on Kant and his influence was planned many years ago in connection with my graduate course on Kant. It was my custom to have reports on the different subjects that arose. Some of these reports were so interesting and seemed so often to put new life into the work of this important philosopher that they seemed to me worth publication. Later I enlarged the plan so as to include essays from some of my present and former colleagues in Princeton University in addition to essays from former students. In all cases it has been the aim of the editor to obtain articles from as many different viewpoints as possible. I have had no thought of unity in mind, and no attempt to harmonize the various articles has been made. It is hoped that the honest differences of opinion to be found in this volume will be interesting to the reader.

Professor Whitney did not live to complete the project himself. After soliciting and editing most of the essays here published, he died before they could be assembled in final form and before he could write the general introduction he had planned as his own contribution to the volume. It was at this point that I was asked

by Mrs. Whitney to assume responsibility as editor. Although most of the important work had already been done, it was necessary for someone to organize the material, arrange for publication, and see the manuscript through the press. I was fully aware, as I still am, of my limitations as a Kant scholar; but I felt that I could not refuse the invitation.

In completing the volume, I have departed as little as possible from Professor Whitney's original intentions. Certain minor changes have been necessitated by unforeseen circumstances. The only genuine innovation has been to solicit essays from two philosophers who have had no formal connection with Princeton University and whose names did not appear on the list of original contributors. This modification was dictated by the form which the book itself came to assume. As the quoted passage indicates, Professor Whitney had imposed no restrictions whatsoever upon the original contributors; every contributor had been invited to write on any topic relating to Kant that he chose and to treat it in any manner he pleased. But I discovered, on reading the various essays, that the volume had evolved a unity and plan of its own: the chief concern of each essay turned out to be evaluative rather than exegetical in character, there was practically no overlapping, and, in conjunction, the essays covered all but two of what would generally be considered the major aspects of Kant's philosophy. It therefore seemed desirable to supplement this lack by inviting contributions in these two neglected fields.

The contributors would like to have this volume regarded as a tribute to the memory of its original editor. We realize that Professor Whitney himself would almost certainly have disapproved of this since he could never accommodate himself to public praise: like Socrates, he suspected the approval of the many. But each of us feels that this is the least we can do to commemorate the loyal friendship, the untiring kindness, and the sound and honest instruction from which so many of his students and colleagues benefited in their years of association with him.

I should like to acknowledge with gratitude the help and co-operation I have received from Mrs. Whitney, from the several contributors, and from Messrs. Joseph Brandt and F. D. Halsey of the Princeton University Press. I am particularly indebted,

however, to my colleagues, Professors Robert Scoon, Theodore M. Greene, and Ledger Wood, for their advice and suggestions on many different occasions, and to Mr. J. F. A. Taylor, Mr. Martin E. Horn, and my wife for their very considerable assistance in the reading of proof and the preparation of the indices.

Permission to quote extensively from other volumes has been kindly granted by the various publishers. The quotations from the Goerwitz translation of Kant's *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer* are by permission of New Church Press. Those from Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*, Joseph's *Some Problems in Ethics*, Prickard's *Longinus on the Sublime*, Meredith's *Kant's Critique of Aesthetic Judgment*, the Fraser edition of Locke's *Essay*, and the Selby-Bigge edition of Hume's *Treatise* are by permission of the Clarendon Press, Oxford. Those from the Mitchell translation of Bergson's *Creative Evolution* are by permission of Henry Holt & Company. Those from Abbott's *Kant's Theory of Ethics* are by permission of Longmans, Green & Company. Those from T. V. Smith's *Beyond Conscience* are by permission of the McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc. Those from N. K. Smith's *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*, Hartmann's *Ethics*, Bowman's *Studies in the Philosophy of Religion*, Oman's *Grace and Personality*, Laird's *A Study in Moral Theory*, Laird's *The Idea of Value*, Gibson's *Locke's Theory of Knowledge*, Carritt's *The Theory of Beauty*, Bosanquet's *A History of Aesthetic*, the Bernard translation of Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, and the N. K. Smith translation of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* are all by permission of The Macmillan Company. Those from the Carus translation of Kant's *Prolegomena* and the Handyside translation of Kant's *Inaugural Dissertation* are by permission of the Open Court Publishing Company. Finally, those from Broad's article, "Time," in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* are by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

The sources of the various photographs reproduced are indicated at the proper place, but it should be noted in addition that the copies of the photographs from which the portraits by Doeblin and by Becker have been made were provided by Professor T. M. Greene from a collection he acquired as a Fellow of the American Council of Learned Societies in 1933.

D. F. B.

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1. *Portrait by Doebler, 1791* *frontispiece*

So far as can now be ascertained, this portrait is in the possession of the Totenkopf und Phoenix Loge of the Masonic Order in Königsberg. Pasted on the back of the picture is the following notice: "Kant Bild von Doebler 1791 gemalt. Schüler des englischen Malers Cunningham. Es ist das einzige Bild zu dem Kant gesessen hat. Durch Pfarrer Wasianski, von der Tragheimer Kirche, der unser Bruder war, und zu den Tischfreunden Kant gehörte, kam das Bild wahrscheinlich gleich nach dem Tode Kants in unser Besitz."
2. *Portrait by Becker, 1768* *facing page 104*

According to reliable sources this portrait was commissioned by Kant himself. It has had a devious history, passing first into the possession of the man who bought Kant's house after Kant's death and later, by bequest, into the possession of a land-owner in Dresden from whom it was finally acquired for the City of Königsberg at the beginning of the present century. It is now hanging in the Stadtgeschichtliches Museum in Königsberg.
3. *Kant and His Friends* *facing page 210*

This painting of Kant and his intimate friends is an imaginative representation of one of the frequent and famous dinner-parties given by Kant after his removal to the house in the Prinzessin-strasse in 1786. It now hangs in the Stadtbibliothek in Königsberg.
4. *The "Old" University at Königsberg* *facing page 314*

It was here that Kant lectured. Founded in 1544 as a "purely Lutheran" college, the University occupied the above buildings on the bank of the Pregel until 1844 when it was moved to its present location. The old buildings now house the Stadtbibliothek of Königsberg.

I

THE TRANSCENDENTAL METHOD

· · · ·

LEDGER WOOD
Princeton University

THE TRANSCENDENTAL METHOD

KANT'S formulation of the transcendental method is perhaps the first attempt in modern philosophy to devise a distinctively philosophical method. Bacon, Hobbes, Descartes, and Leibniz before him were enthusiastic methodologists but they were satisfied to adapt methods to philosophy already achieved by the special sciences, rather than to invent new and unique methods of philosophical enquiry. Thus Bacon espoused for philosophy the inductive method of the natural sciences; Hobbes and Descartes both advocated the mathematical method, although each conceived the method very differently; and Leibniz's philosophy employs a combined inductive-mathematical method. Since Kant it has been the fashion among philosophers to invent new philosophical methods which shall be appropriate to the peculiar subject-matter of philosophy. Witness the Antithetical Method of Fichte, the Intuitional Method of Schelling and Bergson, the Dialectical Method of Hegel. Kant's claim to have devised a *new* technique of philosophical enquiry is usually implicit rather than explicit but there can be no doubt about Kant's pretensions in the matter.¹

The *Critique of Pure Reason* does not contain a systematic exposition of the underlying "logic" of the transcendental method. Part II of the *Critique*, entitled the *Transcendental Doctrine of Method*, where we would naturally look for such an exposition, is extremely disappointing to a student of Kant's methodology, for it contains almost nothing which had not been better expounded in Part I, the *Transcendental Doctrine of Elements*, and even Part I contains no systematic treatment of philosophical methodology. The transcendental method, though nowhere described in general

¹ In the following passage from the *Transcendental Doctrine of Method* Kant makes it clear that the method of the transcendental philosophy is a "peculiar" method and not the mere revamping of the prevailing methods of the sciences: "All *dogmatic* methods whether borrowed from the mathematical or specially invented are as such inappropriate. . . . We cannot here discuss the method peculiar to the transcendental philosophy" (*Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 592 [A737-8=B765-6]). All quotations are from the Kemp Smith translation (London, 1929).

and in the abstract, is revealed in actual operation in the arguments of the *Aesthetic* and *Analytic* and thus Kant's failure to expound the transcendental method *in abstracto* is not to be considered a serious omission.¹ The central arguments of the *Critique* are elaborate exemplifications of the method—indeed Kant believed that they are the only valid applications of the transcendental argument—and from these the general formula of the method can be extracted. The transcendental argument could no doubt be completely generalized and formalized by employing such symbols as "formal elements x, y, z , etc." to designate space, time, and the categories and "propositions p, q , and r " to denote correlative axioms, principles, postulates, etc., but it would hamper rather than aid the exposition. We shall find it more convenient in the subsequent analysis and criticism of the transcendental method to follow closely Kant's exposition of his central argument as it appears in the *Aesthetic* and *Analytic*, emphasizing throughout the essential, underlying "logie" of the transcendental argument.

The transcendental method in its synthetical phase—I am postponing, for the present, a treatment of the analytical method—consists of three stages: I. *The preliminary analysis of experience*, II. *The regress from experience to its conditions or presuppositions*, and III. *The progressive or "deductive" validation of a priori truth*. Analysis, presupposition, and "deduction" are, in the order enumerated, the three operations essential to the transcendental argument.

I. *The Preliminary Analysis of Experience*. The starting-point of the critical investigation is experience.² Experience is, to be sure, a notoriously ambiguous term for Kant and his idealistic successors but in the present context the meaning of the term is clear enough: it denotes any phenomenal object or system of such objects.³ The

¹ The opening sentence of the *Introduction* to the *Critique of Pure Reason* in the second edition is: "There can be no doubt that all our knowledge begins with experience" (*ibid.*, p. 41 [B1]).

² Professor Kemp Smith points out that "Throughout the *Introduction* the term *experience* has (even at times in one and the same sentence) two quite distinct meanings, (1) as product of sense and understanding acting cooperatively and (2) as the raw material (the impressions) of sense" (*A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*,

experience which is the point of departure of the transcendental procedure is not a Humean collection of atomic impressions but rather a perceptual (or introspective) object, having relational and structural organization in addition to qualitative constituents. Kant's empiricism is a "radical empiricism," precisely in William James' sense, for it finds in experience relations as well as the bare sense qualia. The experience which is subjected to analysis is the system of physical objects—and presumably also individual minds—as cognitively apprehended.

The analysis of experience proceeds in accordance with the traditional distinction between matter and form. Kant here as elsewhere appropriates quite uncritically distinctions and classifications of traditional logic and metaphysics; nor does he trouble himself to state the general criteria by which the formal and material ingredients of experience are to be discriminated. Form apparently embraces everything structural and relational in experience; matter pertains to the qualia subsumed under the forms. Form is a principle of unity in experience; matter a principle of manifoldness or multiplicity.⁴ The distinction although not very precisely drawn at the outset becomes progressively clear as the analysis proceeds.

Any object of experience may be analyzed into three constituents: (1) discrete qualia (the "impressions" of Hume's analysis), (2) the spatial and temporal continua (the so-called "forms of intuition") and (3) the pure concepts or categories.⁵ Under item (1) are embraced all *material* ingredients of our experience—the external sense qualia such as colors, sounds, tastes, etc., as well as the qualia of the inner sense, emotional,

2nd ed. [London, 1923], p. 52). The opening sentence of the *Introduction* clearly employs experience in Kemp Smith's first sense.

⁴ "That in the appearance which corresponds to sensation I term its *matter*; but that which so determines the manifold of appearance that it allows of being ordered in certain relations I term the *form of appearance*" (Kant, *op. cit.*, pp. 65f. [A20 = B34]).

⁵ This analysis which underlies the whole critical procedure is given in section 1 of the *Transcendental Aesthetic*, where Kant's purpose is to "isolate" ingredient (2) from ingredients (1) and (3). "In the transcendental aesthetic we shall, therefore first *isolate* sensibility, by taking away from it everything which the understanding thinks through its concepts. . . . Secondly, we shall separate off from it everything which belongs to sensation, so that nothing may remain save pure intuition. . . . In the course of this investigation it will be found that there are two pure forms of sensible intuition . . . namely, space and time" (*ibid.*, p. 67 [A22 = B36]).

volitional, and hedonic data. Kant's analysis of the manifold of inner and outer sense is unfortunately not as complete as could be desired. Items (2) and (3) together constitute the sole *formal* ingredients of experience and it is with them that the transcendental method is preoccupied. The initial analysis of experience into its three component factors is purely *de facto*, that is to say, it involves nothing more than a direct scrutiny of the phenomenally given and the reporting of the several ingredients which it is found to contain. There is at this stage of the argument no pretension to an *a priori* or demonstrative proof of the correctness and exhaustiveness of the analysis. Kant's attitude seems to be: "I find these and no other ingredients in experience. There might conceivably be others, but my analysis has not disclosed them." This attitude of modest empiricism with which the critical argument begins does not unfortunately persist throughout the argument; it is in pleasing contrast to the artificial proofs of completeness of enumerations which appear later in the *Critique*.

The foregoing analysis was devised primarily for perceptual or extrospective experience, but Kant unquestionably intends it to apply equally to introspective experience and presumably also to the apprehension of other minds, a type of experience to which he gives scant attention. If I examine any perceived object or an imaginative reproduction of a perception, I can differentiate: the *sense qualia*, such as colors, sounds, tastes, etc., the *spatio-temporal characteristics* and relations, including shape, size, motion, etc., and the *relational* or *categorial* features, substance, causality, and the rest. A corresponding analysis may be given for the experience of minds including our own. On the side of matter there are the *sense qualia* since they, as presentations, are also members of the conscious series; moreover there are certain hedonic, emotional, and volitional items peculiar to the conscious series. On the formal side, time is the peculiar form of conscious processes and the categories are no less applicable to empirical consciousness than to physical objects. Kant's entire philosophical procedure could have departed either from the introspected self or from the perceived object: his preference for the latter is dictated solely by convenience.

The preliminary analysis of experience, like all intellectual analyses, is, of course, an abstractive and not a real analysis. The

“isolation” and “separation” of the components of experience, described in the passage quoted above,⁶ is only an ideal or imaginative separation. The three factors may—indeed, according to Kant, they do—differ in nature, origin, and function but, in the experience from which philosophical analysis begins, they are completely fused. The analysis, although ideal, is significant because it focuses attention upon real constituents of experience which are disparate both as regards origin and character.

Kant’s initial analysis of experience—regardless of the success or failure of any subsequent constructions resting upon it—is a truly significant contribution to the empirical tradition in philosophy. Kant is as insistent as Locke or Hume that perceptual and introspective experience afford the only possible starting-point for philosophical construction and interpretation. He, too, was aware that rationalistic systems which profess to begin with self-evident principles derive whatever truth they possess from empirical generalizations which are the more dangerous because they are hastily drawn and rest on concealed and inconclusive evidence. But Kant’s empiricism is more radical and hence more adequate than even that of Hume: the latter dissolved experience into concrete and atomic impressions; the former discerned also the relational and structural features of every genuine experience. He saw that the atomic impressions—though real constituents of experience—were mere abstractions when taken out of their structural context. The Kantian analysis of experience thus has the virtues of comprehensiveness and completeness—not, to be sure, an absolute and demonstrable completeness—but the completeness attainable by a remarkably discerning and circumspect analyst. Kant, at times, proceeds on the assumption that his initial analysis of experience was exhaustive but this is, of course, a perfectly gratuitous assumption since no observer, however competent and circumspect, can be sure that some essential ingredient of experience may not have eluded him. Thus any step in the argument of the *Critique* which rests on the supposed exhaustiveness of the preliminary analysis of experience is for that reason inconclusive.

The threefold analysis of experience, considered merely as an enumeration of the observable constituents of any experience, is

⁶ See footnote 5, *supra*, p. 5.

open to certain criticisms. The distinction between the forms of intuition and the concepts of the understanding is one which does not reveal itself to a simple inspection of objects. There is no *prima facie* difference between the spatio-temporal and the categorial features of an experienced object. There may be good and sufficient reasons for distinguishing the "pure forms" from the "pure concepts"—indeed the *Transcendental Aesthetic* gives several proofs that space and time differ *toto caelo* from concepts—but at the first stage of the transcendental procedure there is no ground for dissociating space and time from the categories. The spatio-temporal and the categorial relations together constitute the structural fabric of our experience.

Kant's analysis of experience is defective on its material side, for, while the sense qualia are listed as constituting one of the three ingredients of experience, there is nowhere to be found in the *Critique* a full and painstaking analysis of sensations. The material aspects of experience are for the critical philosophy far less significant than the formal and yet since matter is as indispensable to an experienced object as is its forms, Kant might very properly, within the limits of the critical enterprise, have conducted an extensive investigation into the nature of the sensuously and introspectively given. The classification of sense data, the discovery of correlations between the data of different senses, the discrimination between sensory and introspective data and all the allied problems of the epistemology of perception are relevant to the main tasks of the critical philosophy. For example, the subjective deduction of the categories with its account of the productive imagination and the generative processes which constitute experience would have gained in plausibility if it had departed from a more adequate analysis of the data of sense. Kant ought to have taken greater cognizance of the rôle of the sensuously given both in the constitution of experience and in our apprehension of it.

Kant has made only one genuinely original contribution to what has been referred to above as the "analysis of sensations," namely his conception of intensive magnitude or degree. Intensity, unlike the typical categories of substance and causality, is a non-relational category for it refers to an intrinsic determination of things and not to a relation between things. Among the most significant

distinctions to be drawn within the Kantian—or any other system of philosophical categories—is between categorial determinations which are intrinsic features of things and categorial relations which obtain between things. The category of intensive magnitude or degree is a categorial determination; indeed it is a sub-category of quality, for the intensity which varies continuously from zero to any determinate intensity is an intensity of quality. In Kant's scheme of the categories there is no proper recognition of the category of pure quality. "Quality" as it appears in the table of the categories designates the second triad of categories ("reality," "negation," and "limitation") and as such is merely the class-name for those categories—a name taken over from the table of judgments—and is not the category of quality in the proper sense; whereas the quality involved in the category of substance-accident does not pertain to intrinsic quality but to the relation of inherence obtaining between a quality and its substance. But surely quality is entitled to a place among the basic categories of experience, for though the occurrence of any particular sense quality is contingent and *a posteriori* the assurance that every form is filled with some quality or other is necessary and *a priori*. If then quality is admitted as a primary and basic category of experience, intensity will take its place in the categorial scheme as an important sub-category of quality. Intensity as treated by Kant has a dual application: (1) to the sense qualia themselves and (2) to the supposedly "real" object which is productive of the sense qualia, a duality which is involved in his first edition statement of the *Anticipations of Perception*: "In all appearances sensation and the *real* which corresponds to it in the object (*realitas phaenomenon*), has an *intensive magnitude* or degree."⁷ This twofold application of intensity introduces considerable confusion into Kant's treatment of the category but one thing, at least, is certain, namely that intensive magnitude or degree whatever else it may be is an intrinsic and pervasive feature of the manifold of sense.

The material ingredients of experience are as indispensable to its constitution as is the formal side and ought to have been subjected by Kant to thorough analysis. Instead Kant passes them

⁷ Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 201 (A166).

by with the casual observation that they are "subjective"⁸—although in quite a different sense from that in which the categories are subjective—and proceeds at once to the formal aspect of experience. Kant, having analyzed experience into its material and its formal constituents, then disregards the material constituents almost entirely and applies his characteristic presuppositional method solely to the formal ingredients, space and time and the categories.

II. *The Regress From Experience to its Presuppositions.*⁹ The regress from experience to its necessary presuppositions is the crux of the transcendental argument and at this point Kant's procedure diverges widely from that of traditional empiricists. Empiricism proceeds *inductively* from experiential facts to hypotheses and generalizations grounded in those facts; whereas Kant argues *demonstrably* from the facts to the necessary conditions of their possibility. The empiricist appeals to the factuality of experience, Kant to its essential nature; the empiricist reasons inductively, Kant demonstrably. This is the full import of Kant's statement in the *Introduction* to the second edition that ". . . though all our knowledge begins with experience it does not follow that it all arises out of experience."¹⁰

Kant's presuppositional argument depends directly upon the analysis of experience achieved in Step I. Kant concentrates his attention upon the pervasive, *formal* features of experience, namely space and time and the categories, for, as has been noted above, the transcendental method has no application whatsoever to the matter of experience, the *sense qualia*. The critical problem is: What are the necessary conditions of the very possibility of an experience, the formal features of which are space, time, and the categories? Kant's reply to this question is: Experience is possible

⁸ Kant, *op. cit.*, pp. 72f. (A28-9=B44-5).

⁹ An analysis and criticism of the transcendental method, stressing its regressive logic, is contained in Max Scheler's *Die Transcendentale und die Psychologische Methode* (Leipzig, 1900). Scheler includes among the five distinctive traits of the transcendental method its "logico-reductive" or "regressive" procedure which he contrasts with the progressive procedure of the older rationalism. See especially pp. 36ff. and 51ff. Scheler, however, supposes that the regressive procedure departs not from experience but from scientific judgments and in so doing gives undue emphasis to the Kant's "analytical" method.

¹⁰ Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 41 (B1).

only on the assumption that the formal features found in experience are *a priori* conditions of experience. He arrives at this conclusion by the famous transcendental argument which I shall examine, first as it is applied to space and time in the *Transcendental Aesthetic*, and then as it is applied to the categories in the *Transcendental Analytic*.

A. *The Transcendental Argument for the Apriority of Space and Time.* The presuppositional argument from experience to the necessary conditions of its possibility is the very crux of the transcendental method. The argument professes to be a purely logical and demonstrative argument but Kant in his actual statement of it wavers between a logical and a psychological formulation and the psychological often predominates.¹¹

The *Metaphysical Exposition of Space* is the argument of the *Aesthetic* which most closely parallels the *Transcendental Deduction of the Categories* and which contains the kernel of the transcendental argument. Although the arguments of the *Metaphysical Exposition* are couched in psychological language, it is possible to discern, particularly in the second argument, the underlying logic of the transcendental method. Kant's statement of the second argument is as follows: "Space is a necessary *a priori* representation, which underlies all outer intuitions. We never represent to ourselves the absence of space, though we can quite well think it as empty of objects. It must therefore be regarded as the condition of the possibility of appearances and not as a determination dependent upon them. It is an *a priori* representation which necessarily underlies outer appearances."¹² Kant, in the second sentence above, infers the apriority of space from the mind's *psychological* inability to represent imaginatively objects without space. This appeal to imagination is of course not in the spirit of the transcendental method. When, however, he adds in the next sentence that "it [space] must be regarded as the condition of the possibility of appearances," he is employing the true critical argument. The genuine transcendental argument as regards space would run somewhat as follows: Space is so essential to the constitution of

¹¹ cf. Kemp Smith's contention that the *Transcendental Aesthetic* represents two conflicting views of space, the one psychological and the other logical (*op. cit.*, pp. 88ff.).

¹² Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 68 (A24=B38-9).

experience that without it experience as we know it would collapse into a mere congeries of sense qualities—in other words would cease to be experience. And since space is a condition of the possibility of perceptual experience, it is *a priori* in relation to such experience.

The transcendental argument for the apriority of space may be formalized in the following sequence of propositions: (1) Those elements of experience without which experience is impossible are necessary. (2) Now space is an element of perceptual experience without which such experience is impossible. Hence (3) space is necessary. But (4) necessity is an infallible criterion of the *a priori*. Therefore (5) space is an *a priori* form of the mind. Stated in this way, the argument lends itself readily to examination and criticism of its underlying logic.

Proposition (1) is nothing more or less than a definition of necessity in terms of possibility and impossibility: A may be said to be necessary to B if, without A, B is impossible. This first step in the argument since it is merely a definition in unexceptionable. Proposition (4) likewise is definitional. Necessity, in conjunction with strict universality, is invariably considered by Kant to be the defining trait of the *a priori*; the *a priori* is the necessary and the necessary is the *a priori*. "Necessity and strict universality are thus sure criteria of *a priori* knowledge, and are inseparable from one another."¹³ This definition of apriority is, to be sure, framed with explicit reference to knowledge and the propositions embodying it, yet Kant likewise designates the forms of intuition and the concepts of the understanding as *a priori*, and presumably the same criteria of apriority apply to the propositions and forms alike. A form or concept is *a priori* if it is (a) necessary to experience (b) universal, i.e. pervasive of experience. Kant's failure to differentiate between apriority of forms and categories on the one hand and the apriority of knowledge on the other is just one of the many confusing ambiguities of his terminology.

Proposition (2) is the *nervus probandi* of the transcendental argument for the apriority of space. The reasoning by which he established this proposition sounds plausible enough, but when closely scrutinized its logic is seen to be elusive and unconvincing.

¹³ Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 44 (B4).

Construed as a mere generalization from experience it is no doubt valid; the simple inspection of any perceptual experience reveals that spatiality is one of its ingredients and this evidence alone warrants the inductive generalization: "All perceptual experiences are spatial." But Kant wishes to prove more than this, namely that "all perceptual experiences *must* be spatial because a non-spatial perceptual experience is an impossibility." Now this conclusion could be established, if at all, only by appealing to "intuition" in the Aristotelian sense; such an intuition might show that the mind even in a single perceptual experience discerns that spatiality is of the essence of perceptual objectivity and that without it there could be no perception whatsoever. If the mind could intuit in an individual instance an *essential* connection between the two universals "experience" and "spatiality," then the proposition "All perceptual experience is spatial" would no longer be a mere probable generalization from experience but an immediate self-certainty. Such an intuitive validation of his crucial argument is, however, not available to Kant since it would be a reversion to the dogmatic rationalism which his critical rationalism was designed to supersede.

There is one other possible interpretation which may be placed upon Kant's central argument. His language frequently suggests that the transcendental method of proof is a pragmatic device. Space is essential to experience because when the mind attempts imaginatively to subduct space from experience, it finds that no experience remains. The transcendental proof is thus a *gedanken-experiment*; it is an experiment in the realm of thought which is supposed to have implications for the real world, phenomenally considered. If I cannot *think* experience except spatially, then space must be of the very essence of experience.¹⁴ Now unquestionably this pragmatic and psychological interpretation of the Kantian argument for the apriority of space is justified by many of Kant's own state-

¹⁴ Professor D. W. Gotshalk in an article on "The *A Priori*" ably defends a position which is reminiscent of the Kantian and which he summarizes as follows: "We have said . . . that space is necessary *for* natural knowledge. . . . How can this be known? There seems to be only one way, namely, fair trial. Try to eliminate the allegedly necessary element in question. . . . If that can be done . . . [it] is not a necessity. And if it obviously cannot be done . . . I believe we must admit that, within our knowledge of knowledge, it is a necessity *in* knowledge" (*The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. XXX, 10, p. 256).

ments in the *Aesthetic*. Furthermore the argument, if so construed, is of considerable pragmatic and empirical significance. Spatiality is, as a matter of empirical fact, a pervasive and seemingly essential trait of our perceptual experience. It is difficult, if not impossible, to imagine perceptual objects completely de-spatialized; such perceptual experience would, even if imaginable, differ *toto caelo* from the experiential order with which we are familiar. But to say that such an experience is utterly and absolutely impossible—and that consequently space is necessary and *a priori*—cannot be proven by experience or by hypothetical thought-experiments, however ingenious, but can be established, if at all, only by an intuitive or demonstrative procedure of some sort. Now even Kant finds no formal self-contradiction in the concept of a spaceless experience; the absence of space, however difficult it may be to represent imaginatively, is at least conceivable. How then can Kant affirm with certainty that space is indispensable to experience *as such* except by eventual recourse to some sort of intellectual intuition? The crucial step in the critical argument involves, whether Kant is prepared to admit it or not, an appeal to intuitive self-evidence. Neither by generalization from experience nor by ingenious thought-experiments can he prove that space is a necessary presupposition of the very possibility of experience. Our final judgment of Kant's presuppositional argument from experience to an *a priori* spatiality is that it is utterly lacking in logical cogency and that in attempting to proceed *demonstrably* from an *empirical* starting-point, it fails to achieve either the fertility of empirical generalization or the certainty of demonstrative inference.

The final conclusion that space is an *a priori* form of the mind (proposition [5]) may seem to be a valid inference from the preceding propositions but even this step in the argument conceals a serious ambiguity in the term *a priori*. Kant's *a priori* is a fusion of two utterly disparate *a priors*: (a) the *logical* and (b) the *idealistic*. The *a priori* as defined by proposition (4) is the *a priori* as the necessary in relation to experience; but, in the conclusion of the transcendental argument, space is asserted to be *a priori* in the idealistic sense of being a form of the mind, contributed by the

mind to experience.¹⁵ Whether Kant failed to distinguish the two *a priori* or whether he considered the inference from the one to the other to be so immediate as to render the distinction superfluous is difficult to say. We can be certain, however, that for Kant space is *a priori* in both senses and that the idealistic *a priori* is a corollary of the logical *a priori*. The necessity and pervasiveness of spatiality or of any other *a priori* element of experience are explicable only if the element in question belongs to the structure of the mind. This is a central insight of the Kantian philosophy; indeed it is the transcendental idealism which Kant himself described as his Copernican revolution in philosophy. The ambiguity in the term *a priori* thus conceals an essential step in the transcendental argument, namely the advance from the logical *a priori* to the idealistic *a priori*. Transcendental idealism (the theory that mind is constitutive of experience) and critical rationalism (the theory that there are *a priori* elements in experience and in knowledge) are complementary aspects of the critical philosophy and it is his transcendental idealism which he seeks to deduce from his critical rationalism. Let us examine in detail and seek to determine the cogency of Kant's inference from "the *a priori* necessary" to "the *a priori* in the mind."

The conversion of the logical *a priori* into the idealistic *a priori* is another instance of the already familiar regressive or presuppositional argument. Just as Kant in establishing proposition (2) argues that perceptual experience presupposes space as the *a priori* condition of its possibility, so here he asserts that the logical apriority of space in turn presupposes its apriority in the mind. Only on the assumption that space is an *a priori* form of the mind's intuition, can its *a priori* necessity be accounted for. All attempts to explain the *a priori* in any other way have proven unsuccessful. The idealistic status of space has to be accepted as the only possible explanation of its *a priori* necessity.¹⁶

The presuppositional argument for the ideality of space as employed by Kant sounds very much like the ordinary method of

¹⁵ The telling phrase "*a priori* in the mind" recurs frequently in the *Aesthetic*, for example in the passage: ". . . while the matter of all appearances is given to us *a posteriori* only, its form must be ready for the sensations *a priori* in the mind . . ." (Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 66 [A20=B34]).

¹⁶ This argument is not explicitly formulated in the *Transcendental Aesthetic* but is readily supplied by paraphrasing the general argument as stated in the *Introduction*.

hypothesis as employed in the empirical sciences. The theory of the ideality of space is to be accepted because it affords the only possible explanation of the necessity and apriority of space. Is it not, then, merely the most adequate of the alternative epistemological hypotheses? Kant's phrase "only possible explanation" is misleading and gratuitous for what assurance can he have that he has exhaustively enumerated the alternative explanations of the mathematical *a priori* and that all are eliminated except the idealistic explanation? Kant is, of course, insistent that the reasoning of the *Transcendental Aesthetic* is not hypothetical but demonstrably certain.¹⁷ Yet the real significance of Kant's transcendental idealism is that it affords an elaborate and remarkably ingenious hypothesis to account for the alleged *a priori* elements in our experience and in our knowledge. If space is a form of the mind, then the supposed necessity and apriority of space and of geometrical science become plausible. Accordingly the merits and deficiencies of the Kantian position are to be judged not by the canons of absolute and demonstrable inference—so judged it must be accounted a complete failure—but by the criteria which apply to hypotheses generally.

Kant's transcendental idealism, despite all his protestations to the contrary, is no more than a plausible and ingenious philosophical hypothesis and we shall now examine it in this light.¹⁸ Now the doctrine of the ideality of space, while it doubtless would account for the pervasiveness of space in our perceptual experience, could afford no explanation of its alleged necessity, that is to say, its

¹⁷ "The . . . concern of our Transcendental Aesthetic is that it should not obtain favor merely as a plausible hypothesis, but should have that certainty and freedom from doubt which is required of any theory which is to serve as an *organon*" (*ibid.*, p. 85 [A46 = B63]). See also *ibid.*, p. 11 (Axv) and p. 25 (Bxxii_n.).

¹⁸ Kant himself wavers somewhat in his attitude towards hypotheses. In the *Preface* to the first edition he protests emphatically that he has no traffic with hypotheses. "Everything, therefore, which bears any manner of resemblance to an hypotheses is to be treated as contraband; it is not to be put up for sale even at the lowest price, but forthwith confiscated, immediately upon detection" (*ibid.*, p. 11 [Axv]). His declaration in the second edition is more moderate: "[The Copernican revolution in philosophy] which is expounded in the *Critique*, I put forward in this preface as an hypothesis only, in order to draw attention to the character of these first attempts at such a change, which are always hypothetical. But in the *Critique* itself it will be proved apodeictically not hypothetically, from the nature of our representations of space and time and from the elementary concepts of the understanding" (*ibid.*, p. 25 [Bxxii_n.]).

apriority. *If* spatiality belongs to the very structure of the mind's perceptual apparatus, all its perceptions will be spatial. But the pervasiveness and necessity guaranteed by Kant's ingenious device are *de facto* and relative, not *a priori* and absolute. The *a priori* necessity of space, in relation to a mind-constituted experience, depends upon the psychological uniformity of the mind. Our minds may, as a matter of actual fact, be unable to perceive objects except under the form of space; we have, however, no assurance that this will always continue to be the case, or, in other words, that a non-spatial experience is psychologically impossible.

Kant's positive argument for the ideality of space is reinforced by a negative argument, namely the refutation of realism, its only alternative. Kant recognizes two possible theories concerning the status of space: the realistic theory that space is a determination of the objectively real, which the mind knows by representation, and Kant's own view that space is a form of the mind.¹⁹ On the former view the *a priori* necessity of space—and the consequent validity of geometry—are inexplicable. The elimination of its only alternative forces us to accept the theory of the ideality of space as the only possible explanation of the spatial *a priori*.²⁰ But is the *a priori* any more plausible on the idealistic hypothesis ("the object must conform to the faculty of intuition") than on the realistic hypothesis ("intuition must conform to the constitution of objects")? Why has a space which is a form of the mind a greater claim to *a priori* necessity than a space which is a determination of objects? There is in the logic of the situation no difference between a realistic and an idealistic explanation of space and geometrical science; realism certainly provides just as good a framework for the *a priori* as does idealism. In either case the pervasiveness of space—if space really is pervasive—is merely *de facto* and its necessity is conditional and hypothetical. Samuel Alexander's space-

¹⁹ There is perhaps a third possibility not envisaged by Kant, namely that space is *both* a form of the mind and an independently real determination of the object. cf. Kemp Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

²⁰ The rival theories are set against one another in a well-known passage in the second edition where *for the time being* Kant condescends to treat his theory merely as an hypothesis: "If intuition must conform to the constitution of objects, I do not see how we could know anything of the latter *a priori*; but if the object (as object of the senses) must conform to the constitution of our faculty of intuition, I have no difficulty in conceiving such a possibility" (*op. cit.*, p. 22 [Bxvii]).

time doctrine, which is an inverted Kantianism, is, whatever we may think of its ultimate validity, a valuable antidote to Kant's idealistic *a priori*. Alexander is as emphatic as Kant in his insistence upon the pervasiveness and apriority of space and time; indeed his validation of mathematics by reference to an *a priori* space-time closely parallels the Kantian validation though it rests on realistic instead of idealistic foundations.²¹ Alexander's realistic *a priori* demonstrates conclusively that the existence of the *a priori* is quite independent of the issue between idealism and realism and that the logical *a priori* is compatible either with realism or idealism.

The critical philosophy, then, may be divided into two quite distinct parts: (1) *critical rationalism*, Kant's theory of the *a priori* and its function in knowledge and (2) *transcendental idealism*, Kant's theory of the creative mind which is constitutive of experience. The critical epistemology is not incompatible with the transcendental idealism, yet Kant's argument from the one to the other is certainly inconclusive. I am convinced that the really significant insights of the critical epistemology could be preserved even if the whole transcendental paraphernalia were either abolished altogether or else translated into psychological terms. Kant's *metaphysical* idealism—for it is that despite Kant's professed repudiation of all dogmatic metaphysics—is, in relation to his critical rationalism, a mere supplementary hypothesis which has to compete on terms of equality with the rival hypothesis of realism.

B. *The Transcendental Argument for the Apriority of the Categories.* Kant's division of the *Critique* into *Aesthetic*, *Analytic* and *Dialectic* is thoroughly artificial; it chops the exposition into disjointed members and obscures the essential unity of the transcendental argument. We have adopted an order of exposition which cuts across the division between the *Aesthetic* and the *Analytic* and which conforms to the inherent logic of the transcendental method. The foregoing argument for the apriority of space admits of complete generalization; indeed Kant might have stated it in symbolic terms substituting "formal element X" wherever "space" or "time" appears in the *Aesthetic*. The argu-

²¹ cf. S. Alexander, *Space, Time and Deity* (London, 1920), Vol. I, Chap. v, pp. 150ff.

ment is repeated *mutatis mutandis* for the categories and for the transcendental unity of apperception. The retrogressive or presuppositional argument of the *Aesthetic* is called by the misleading name, "metaphysical exposition" of space and time, and when the same argument recurs in the *Analytic* it is rechristened "the transcendental deduction" of the categories. The latter expression is the more appropriate and the "metaphysical exposition" of space and time is in reality a "transcendental deduction" of space and time.²² Kant's exaggeration of the difference between sensibility and understanding tends to conceal the identical logic underlying the arguments of the *Aesthetic* and the *Analytic*. Space and time are forms of our sensuous intuition and the categories are concepts of the understanding, yet they are equally ingredients of experience and consequently there is no *prima facie* ground for segregating space and time from the categories. The arguments of the *Aesthetic* and the *Analytic* proceed in identical fashion though from different constituents of primitive experience.

The transcendental argument departs here as before from the *de facto* analysis of experience; but, whereas the *Aesthetic* isolates space and time for separate investigation, the *Analytic* concentrates attention upon the categorial relations apart from space and time and the sense qualia. The first task of the *Analytic* is the enumeration of the categories. If Kant had remained true to the radical empiricism of his initial analysis of experience, he would have enumerated, analyzed, and described the relational categories as they presented themselves in any perceptual experience. Instead, Kant sought to give a demonstrably complete enumeration of the categories, and, for this purpose, devised the artificial and totally unconvincing "metaphysical deduction" of the categories. How much better would Kant's purposes have been served by a modest empiricism than by this pretentious pseudorationalism. Kant introduced no such absurd "metaphysical deduction" into the argument of the *Aesthetic*. There he virtually said: "Space and time are the only two forms of intuition because I find them and no others." Here too he should have been satisfied

²² Kant himself suggests such a usage when in an early section of the *Analytic* he remarks: "We have already, by means of a transcendental deduction, traced the concepts of space and time to their sources, and have explained and determined their *a priori* objective validity" (*op. cit.*, p. 122 [A87=B119f.]).

with a careful and circumspect analysis and description of the constitutive elements of cognized objects without seeking demonstrable certainty where such certainty is unattainable.²³

Experience then is the point of departure of the transcendental deduction of the categories—not just unanalyzed experience, but experience in so far as it is structural and relational. “Objectivity” is the term employed by Kant to designate the relational features of experience other than the spatio-temporal. An object designates any configuration within experience the organization of which is conformable to the categories. Since presumably *all* the categories cooperate in the constitution of any single object, an enquiry into the nature and conditions of objectivity is an investigation of the whole system of categories. The *Transcendental Deduction of the Pure Concepts of Understanding* seeks to determine the conditions of the possibility of experience *in general*, that is to say, of objectified or categorized experience.²⁴

The *Deduction* is undertaken not for each category individually but for all the categories considered *en bloc*. Kant’s lumping together of the categories throughout the *Transcendental Deduction* was doubtless a consequence of his confidence in the earlier metaphysical deduction of the categories which professed to show that the categories as listed by him all stand or fall together. The metaphysical deduction is thus an integral part of the transcendental deduction. The latter only demonstrates the validity of categories—not of any particular set; the former proves that the *bona fide* categories are such and such and no others. The two deductions in combination, supposing both to be valid, would establish the validity of each of the twelve categories on Kant’s list without the

²³ Kant evidently had some misgivings regarding the possibility of giving an ultimate explanation as to why there are just these and no other categories. Witness the following: “This peculiarity of our understanding, that it can produce *a priori* unity of apperception solely by means of the categories, and only by such and so many, is as little capable of further explanation as why we have just these and no other functions of judgment, or why space and time are the only forms of our possible intuition” (*ibid.*, p. 161 [B145-6]). If Kant had taken this statement seriously he would have dispensed with the “metaphysical deduction” of the categories and provided instead an “empirical discovery” of the categories.

²⁴ Kant expresses this in somewhat involved fashion as follows: “The *a priori* conditions of possible experience in general are at the same time conditions of the possibility of objects of experience. Now I maintain that the categories, above cited, are nothing but the conditions of thought in a possible experience, just as space and time are the conditions of intuition for the same experience” (*ibid.*, p. 138 [A111]).

necessity for individual deduction. But since the metaphysical deduction is generally acknowledged to be utterly worthless, it is unfortunate that Kant did not append deductions for each of the twelve categories *seriatim* as he gave separate deductions for space and time in the *Aesthetic*. As it is, the explanation and validation of the individual categories are delayed until the section on the *System of all Principles of Pure Understanding*.

I shall now examine the actual argument of the celebrated *Transcendental Deduction of the Categories*, limiting myself to the so-called "objective deduction" since the "subjective deduction"—however important it may be for the understanding of the creative processes whereby experience is constituted—is not indispensable to the central argument of the *Transcendental Deduction*. Kant defines the purpose of the transcendental deduction as: "The explanation of the manner in which concepts can relate . . . *a priori* to objects."²⁶ The argument seeks to validate the categories in their empirical employment and it accomplishes this by means of the already familiar retrogressive or presuppositional procedure. The categories are shown to be conditions under which alone experience of objects is possible and for this reason they are inferred to be *a priori* necessary in the sense of being valid for all actual and possible experience.²⁶

The principle which underlies and mediates the deduction is: "Concepts which yield the objective ground of the possibility of experience are for this very reason necessary."²⁷ Kant makes no attempt to validate this principle and a captious critic might charge Kant with having made an uncriticized assumption at the outset of the critical enquiry. Is not the whole argument vitiated by the dogmatic assumption that the *sine qua non* of the possibility of experience is for that reason necessary and *a priori*? This criticism is not, I believe, well founded. The so-called "principle"

²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 121 (A85=B117).

²⁷ Kant restates this argument over and over again with slight variations of phraseology. The following statement is one of the clearest and most direct: "The objective validity of the categories as *a priori* concepts rests, therefore, on the fact that, so far as the form of thought is concerned, through them alone does experience become possible. They relate of necessity and *a priori* to objects of experience, for the reason that only by means of them can any object whatsoever of experience be thought" (*ibid.*, p. 126 [A93=B126]).

²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 126 (A94=B126).

of the deduction is not a synthetic *a priori* proposition surreptitiously introduced into an argument devised ultimately to validate certain other synthetic *a priori* propositions, namely the principles of the understanding; rather is it definitional, that is to say, analytical in character. The underlying principle of the transcendental deduction is not a truth but a definition of necessity and apriority in terms of the possibility of experience and is thus precisely the same definition to which appeal was made in the argument for the apriority of space.²⁸

The argument has a specious or pseudo-simplicity and considerable elaboration is necessary to disclose its full import. The categories are proved to be necessary and *a priori* because they are the necessary conditions of that objectivity which characterizes all our experience. But how can Kant be certain that without the categories objective experience would be impossible? There is, in the nature of the case, no way of *actually* eliminating the categories from experience to demonstrate that experience under those conditions is rendered impossible. The elimination can only be performed *in thought*, that is to say imaginatively by a thought-experiment similar to that suggested in the *Aesthetic*. Think away space and time from perceptual experience and it collapses into a mere congeries of spaceless and timeless sensations which belong to a sub-perceptual level of experience; imaginatively de-categorize experience and it dissolves into a mere phantasmagoria of sense qualities haphazardly distributed over the spatio-temporal field like pigments carelessly daubed on a canvas. The thought-experiment proposed by Kant in the *Deduction of the Categories*, despite the speculative brilliance of its appeal to the philosophical imagination, fails utterly to demonstrate the *a priori* necessity and validity of the categories.

The criticisms directed against the presuppositional argument for an *a priori* space²⁹ may be urged with equal cogency against the transcendental deduction of the categories. The *de facto* starting-point, while it may warrant generalizations and hypotheses, cannot provide the basis for a demonstrative procedure such as the deduction professes to be. Experience may reveal itself as categorized, that is to say experience may justify the generalization

²⁸ cf. proposition (1), *supra*, p. 12.

²⁹ cf. the discussion of proposition (2), *supra*, pp. 12ff.

"All objects are categorial" and this in turn may suggest the hypothesis that empirical objects are constituted by preexistent categorial concepts, but experience can never demonstrably establish these conclusions. If the initial pervasiveness of the categories is *de facto*—and Kant seems to acknowledge that this is the case—then the validity of the categories will ever remain *de facto*. Empirical factuality can never give rise to logical necessity. The ingenious thought-experiment whereby Kant sought to effect the transition from the one to the other has at best psychological and pragmatic significance. The inability of the mind to think, that is to say, to imagine a de-categorized experience proves nothing except perhaps a limitation of the mind's imaginative faculty. To establish the indispensability of the categories to experience would require a *real*- and not merely a *thought*-experiment, and this would involve the attempted elimination of certain categorial traits from experience or the search for an experience entirely devoid of such traits. That such uncategorized experience is in fact not found merely confirms the inductive generalization: "All actual experience is characterized by such and such categories"; it cannot, however, prove that experience essentially and of necessity exemplifies just these and no other categories.

The transcendental deduction of the categories professes to prove not only their necessity but their subjectivity as well. The subjective *a priori* (the *a priori* in the mind) is deduced from the logical *a priori* (the *a priori* necessary) and is not smuggled into the argument under cover of an ambiguity in the expression *a priori* as was the case in the *Aesthetic*.³⁰ The passage from the one *a priori* to the other is effected by Kant's characteristic presuppositional argument. Just as experience presupposes the *a priori* necessity and validity of the categories, the apriority of the categories, in turn, presupposes their subjectivity.³¹

³⁰ cf. the discussion of proposition (5), *supra*, pp. 14ff.

³¹ The presuppositional argument for idealism is contained in the following paragraph from the deduction in the first edition: "Thus the order and regularity in the appearances which we entitle *nature*, we ourselves introduce. We could never find them in appearances, had not we ourselves, or the nature of our mind, originally set them there. For this unity of nature has to be a necessary one, that is, has to be an *a priori* certain unity of the connection of appearances; and such synthetic unity could not be established *a priori* if there were not subjective grounds of such unity contained *a priori* in the original cognitive powers of the mind, and if these subjective conditions,

The culmination of Kant's transcendental idealism is his doctrine of the transcendental unity of apperception. This unity of self-consciousness is presupposed by the categories as the categories are presupposed by experience, or rather it is directly presupposed by experience in so far as it is categorized. The deduction of the categories and the deduction of the transcendental unity of apperception are accomplished together, one ought rather to say that they constitute one and the same deduction. This is a consequence of the intimate relation obtaining between the categories and the unity of apperception; the latter is not something behind the categories which impresses them upon the manifold of experience, as a man with a set of rubber stamps imprints them successively on the sheet of paper before him, rather is it the unity *in and of* the categories. The transcendental unity of apperception is the functional unity which manifests itself identically—and yet with a difference—in each of the categories. The categories are all forms of synthesis—it is this which constitutes their underlying identity—but each is an unique kind of synthesis. The synthesis of qualities in the unity of a substance is very different from the synthesis of events in the unity of a causal nexus, yet both are synthetic processes. Kant seems to have in mind the conception of a single primitive synthesis which by differentiation becomes the several categorial syntheses.³² This primitive unity is not that of the category of unity³³ but is one which logically antedates all the categories including the category of unity. The transcendental unity of apperception is thus the original synthetic unity which is repeated with variation in the several categorial syntheses; one might even say that it is related to the several categories as the universal is to the particulars which exemplify it. It is not surprising, in view of the close relation between the categories and the unity of apperception, that the discussion of the latter is incorporated into the *Transcendental Deduction of the Pure Concepts of Understanding*.

The transcendental unity of apperception is a *sine qua non* of experience because it is presupposed by the categories which in inasmuch as they are the grounds of the possibility of knowing any object whatsoever in experience, were not at the same time objectively valid" (*ibid.*, p. 147 [A125-6]).

³² cf. his doctrine of "combination in general" in the second edition restatement of the deduction, *ibid.*, pp. 151ff. (B129ff.).

³³ cf. *ibid.*, p. 152 (B131).

turn are presupposed by experience. Kant in his statement of the argument at times seems to proceed *directly* from experience to the transcendental unity of apperception as the condition of its possibility rather than *indirectly* by way of the categories,³⁴ but the deduction of the transcendental unity of apperception is mediated by the deduction of the categories which precedes it, and thus the retrogressive argument proceeds from experience to the categories and thence to the transcendental unity of apperception. The latter principle, because it is integral to the categories, is indispensable to the possibility of experience and is therefore like them *a priori*.³⁵

The transcendental unity of apperception occupies an unique position in the sphere of the transcendental in that it is the final term in the retrogressive series; experience and the categories presuppose it but it does not presuppose anything else. The transcendental unity of apperception accordingly occupies a position in Kant's system analogous to that of substance in systems which define substance as the ultimate subject of predication (Aristotle and Leibniz) or the independent and self-sufficient (Descartes and Spinoza); it is the ultimate *a priori*, the end term in the transcendental regress. The backward movement from experience to its logical preconditions having been carried to its culmination, Kant, in the third and final step of the transcendental argument, reverses the direction of his thought and moves forward from the *a priori* forms to the *a priori* truths which they validate.

³⁴ A typical passage in which the transcendental unity of apperception is "deduced" without explicit reference to the categories is A156-7=B195-6 (Kemp Smith translation, p. 193). Even here it is taken for granted that the transcendental unity of apperception manifests itself only in the several categorial syntheses.

³⁵ Professor Kemp Smith believes that the unity of apperception and the generative processes through which it operates (the understanding and the productive imagination) are *not a priori* "in the manner of the categories" (cf. *op. cit.*, p. 252). "They differ from the categories in that they are not immanent in experience, constituent of it, and, cannot therefore be known in their intrinsic nature" (*ibid.*, p. 238). But is there for Kant any essential difference between the apriority of the categories and of the transcendental unity itself? Admittedly the unity of apperception is in its transcendental aspects *not* immanent in experience but neither are the categories considered in their transcendental character. The categories are "immanent" in experience only in the sense that experience embodies and exemplifies them—and in the same way the transcendental unity of apperception manifests itself in the pervasive unity and organization of experience—but as pure concepts of the understanding the categories belong to the mind's transcendental apparatus and as such have precisely the same status as the unity of apperception itself. Hence the categories and the unity of apperception would seem to be *a priori* in the same manner.

III. The Progressive or “Deductive” Phase of the Transcendental Argument. The retrogressive argument which demonstrates that the formal ingredients of experience are *a priori*, although embodying the essential and most original insights of the critical philosophy, is not the end and goal of the critical argument. Rather does it serve as the ground for the progressive argument, which validates *a priori* knowledge. The validity of *a priori* knowledge is so immediate a corollary of the apriority of space, time, and the categories that it scarcely seems to involve any inference at all. But as Kant fully appreciated, the *a priori* status of the intuitional and conceptual forms of our experience is one thing, the validity of synthetic *a priori* judgments conversant with these forms and with actual objects constituted by them is quite another and thus the inference from *a priori* forms to *a priori* knowledge is necessary to complete the transcendental argument.

A. The Validation of Mathematical Truth. The progressive or “deductive” argument of the *Aesthetic* is designated the “transcendental exposition” to distinguish it from the “metaphysical exposition” upon which it depends. The purpose of the “transcendental exposition” is to validate mathematics by means of the apriority of space and time,³⁶ but in the entire statement of the “transcendental exposition” it is impossible to find a single explicit description of the manner in which the apriority of space guarantees the validity of geometrical science. Instead Kant, proceeding in accordance with the analytic method, shows that “our explanation is . . . the only explanation that makes intelligible the possibility of geometry, as a body of *a priori* synthetic knowledge.”³⁷ This analytical argument is the exact reverse of the progressive argument which ought to have appeared at this juncture, for it assumes what the “metaphysical exposition” is supposed to prove, namely the validity of mathematical knowledge.

³⁶ Kant gives a most confusing description of the transcendental exposition: “I understand by a transcendental exposition the explanation of a concept, as a principle from which the possibility of other *a priori* synthetic knowledge can be understood (*op. cit.*, p. 70 [B40]). The word “concept” presumably refers to the forms of intuition which Kant had just painstakingly proven *not* to be concepts. Moreover the phrase “other *a priori* synthetic knowledge” slurs over the distinction between *a priori* forms and *a priori* knowledge—precisely the distinction upon which the “metaphysical exposition” rests.

³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 71 (B41).

Kant may have failed to supply the progressive argument in the "metaphysical exposition" because the inference seemed to him so direct and immediate as to require no elaboration. If space is *a priori*, why, of course, geometry is true. But this inference is far more complex than appears on the surface. It would seem to involve these three steps: (1) The propositions of geometry are conversant with the formal properties and relations of figures constructed in an intuitional space. But (2) intuitional space is an *a priori* necessary form of all experience, actual and possible. Therefore (3) the propositions of geometry are *a priori* true for all configurations in experience, actual or possible. In this argument, proposition (1) is an explicit statement of geometrical intuitionism, the theory that geometry is conversant with the properties and relations of an intuitional space and not with conceptual constructions. Without the assumption that the mind can intuitively apprehend the *a priori* space-time continua, Kant could not possibly have validated mathematical science. Proposition (2) is, of course, the outcome of the retrogressive or presuppositional argument and thus the "metaphysical exposition" supplies the main premise of the "transcendental exposition." It is significant in this connection that *the validation of geometrical knowledge depends not upon the ideality of space but upon its a priori necessity*, an observation which confirms our earlier contention that the doctrine of the ideality of space is not essential to the transcendental argument as such, however large it may loom in Kant's philosophy as a whole.

Our criticism of the "transcendental exposition" will be directed exclusively towards the mathematical intuitionism of proposition (1). Proposition (2) is the conclusion of the metaphysical deduction and has already been criticized in detail. Moreover the argument as a whole would seem to be formally valid since if it be conceded that geometry is intuitional and the spatial intuition is *a priori*, then certainly it follows that geometry is *a priori* true. The real nerve of the "transcendental exposition" is the conception of geometry as a science of the properties and relations pertaining to an intuitional space.

Without attempting a discussion of the relative merits of an intuitive and a conceptualistic interpretation of mathematics, I shall call attention to some of the peculiar difficulties of the special

form of the intuitional theory of mathematics advanced by Kant in the *Transcendental Aesthetic*. Perhaps the chief limitation of Kant's account of mathematics is his failure to explain just how, on his theory, the mind comes by its knowledge of geometrical truth. All questions concerning the genesis of knowledge are considered by Kant merely psychological and hence irrelevant to the transcendental enquiry. Yet he is after all seeking an explanation of the validity of mathematical science and such explanation remains incomplete as long as the *modus operandi* of geometrical intuition remains unaccounted for. The view to which Kant would seem to be committed is that the mind intuitively apprehends the spatial continuum, ideally constructs figures in this continuum, and thereby discerns the basic properties of *a priori* space. The propositional formulations of these intuitive insights serve as the axioms of geometry; they are the basic synthetic *a priori* truths from which the whole system of geometry is deducible in accordance with the processes of formal logic. This account of Kant's theory of mathematical cognition is largely conjectural and yet it seems to be the only interpretation compatible with the "transcendental exposition."

Mathematical propositions are true because of their conformity to the nature of intuited space. The mind's ability to intuit the whole of the spatial continuum and to discern its properties seemed to Kant so natural as to require no explanation. Is not space a form of the mind's intuition and as such directly accessible to the mind's direct scrutiny? What is more natural than that the mind should be able to apprehend directly its own *a priori* forms? But the mind's cognition of its own forms presents on Kant's theory serious if not insurmountable difficulties. The fact that space is a part of the mind's perceptual apparatus hinders rather than facilitates the mind's apprehension of it. Kant evidently believed that the mind in the very act of perceiving or imagining an object somehow intuits the pure form of space. This view was doubtless fostered by the ambiguity of the expression "form of intuition" which may mean either "form of the mind's intuiting" (this is the primary sense intended by Kant) or "form intuited by the mind" (a meaning suggested in certain contexts). The idealistic status of space seemed to Kant to make it more readily accessible to direct inspection, but just the opposite is the case. The intuition of space

is beset with difficulties *because* space is a form of intuition. Here again Kant's epistemology suffers from the encroachment of his idealism.

B. *The Validation of the Principles of Pure Natural Science.* So closely does the validation of the principles of science from the apriority of the categories parallel the validation of the axioms of mathematics from the apriority of the spatial intuition that there is little to add to what has just been said above. The main task of the *Analytic of Principles* is the proof of the basic assumptions of the sciences—exclusive of mathematics—by appeal to the *a priori* validity of the categories which was established by the transcendental deduction of the categories. The *Transcendental Deduction* sought to demonstrate that the categories are universally and necessarily valid for all experience, actual and possible; the principles are merely statements in propositional form that each category in turn is so applicable. The actual demonstration of the principles, by reference to the deduction of the categories, is thus more direct and immediate than the transcendental exposition of space, for the latter is, as suggested above, mediated by the intuition of space. The truth of the principle is a direct corollary of the validity of the corresponding categories—the principle being in each case nothing more nor less than the synthetic *a priori* proposition asserting that the category in question is valid for all objects of experience.³⁸ The actual proofs given by Kant for the several principles contribute very little to the elucidation of the third step in the transcendental argument. They are, for the most part, deductions of the individual categories rather than proofs of the correlative synthetic *a priori* principles, and accordingly they illustrate the second and not the third step in the transcendental procedure. In the *Aesthetic*, the third step in the transcendental argument constituted a definite inferential advance, but, in the *Analytic*, it merely formulates propositionally the validity of the correlative category. Thus the validity of the category of substance guarantees the truth of the principle that every empirical

³⁸ The following is one of the rare passages in which Kant formulates this argument in general terms: "We then assert that the conditions of the possibility of experience in general are likewise conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience, and that for this reason they have objective validity in a synthetic *a priori* judgment" (*ibid.*, p. 194 [A158]).

object is a substance possessing attributes.³⁹ The validity of the causal category implies the causal principle that every phenomenal event is causally dependent upon other such events,⁴⁰ and the other principles follow in similar manner from their correlative categories.

Perhaps the most interesting of the validating arguments is that given for the comprehensive principle of all the analogies which asserts that objects of experience are connected by necessary relations.⁴¹ This general principle derives its validity not from any individual category but from the transcendental unity of apperception itself.⁴² The fact that the unity of apperception—as well as the individual categories—has its correlative principle would seem to confirm our earlier contention that the transcendental unity of apperception is *a priori* in much the same sense as the categories themselves. The unity of apperception is the category of categories which would retain its essential significance in the Kantian epistemology even if deprived of its idealistic status and thus the thesis that the underlying unity of experience must derive from an idealistic principle is one of the gratuitous assumptions of the Kantian epistemology.

The inference from *a priori* categories to *a priori* truths is so direct that one is tempted to question whether it is really an inference at all. Does the principle say any more than that the correlative category is universally and necessarily applicable to experience—which is precisely what was proved by the deduction of the categories? The fact is that the deduction of the categories is the real nerve of the transcendental argument and that the principles merely state propositionally what that deduction has already

³⁹ Kant's formulation of this principle is: "All appearances contain the permanent (substance) as the object itself, and the transitory as its mere determination . . ." (*ibid.*, p. 212 [A182]). The second edition statement of this principle, namely "In all change of appearances substance is permanent; its quantum in nature is neither increased nor diminished" (*ibid.*, p. 212 [B224]) is incorrect since it is deducible not from the category of substance but from quantity.

⁴⁰ Kant's statement of the *Second Analogy* is: "Everything that happens, that is, begins to be, presupposes something upon which it follows according to a rule" (*ibid.*, p. 218 [A189]).

⁴¹ "The principle of the analogies is: Experience is possible only through the representation of a necessary connection of perceptions" (*ibid.*, p. 208 [B218]).

⁴² "The general principle of the three analogies rests on the necessary unity of apperception, in respect of all possible empirical consciousness . . ." (*ibid.*, p. 209 [B220]).

proved. The principle is in every instance nothing more nor less than the propositional articulation of the applicability of the category in question to all actual and possible experience.

The Analytic Method. The synthetic method, which begins with experience, ascends to its *a priori* presuppositions, and finally descends to *a priori* truths, is complete and self-sufficient and does not require the additional confirmation afforded by the analytical method of the *Prolegomena* and of certain sections of the *Critique*. Kant, at times, conveys the impression that the analytic method is nothing but an expository device which propounds the results of the transcendental argument while dispensing with the argument itself.⁴³ The analytic method does, to be sure, enable Kant to express less formidably his main insight, namely the dependence of *a priori* cognition upon *a priori* forms, but in addition it does possess some probative value.

The *starting-point* of the analytical method is the *conclusion* of the synthetical method, namely that there are certain true synthetic *a priori* propositions in mathematics and pure physics. But although the synthetic and analytic arguments move in opposite directions, they employ the same methodological procedure, namely the method of logical presupposition. The analytical method seeks to determine the conditions under which alone synthetic *a priori* cognition is possible and it finds that this is possible only on the assumption that space, time, and the categories are *a priori* forms of the mind.⁴⁴

⁴³ Kant gives the following general description of the analytic method: "Prolegomena . . . are designed for preparation exercises; they are intended rather to point out what we have to do in order if possible to actualize a science than to propound it. They must therefore rest upon something already known as trustworthy, from which we can set out with confidence, and ascend to sources as yet unknown, the discovery of which will . . . explain to us what we knew. The Method of *Prolegomena* . . . is consequently analytical. . . . We can say with confidence that certain pure *a priori* synthetical cognitions, pure mathematics and pure physics are actual and given. . . . We have therefore some at least uncontested synthetical knowledge *a priori*, and need not ask whether it is possible, for it is actual but how it is possible . . ." (*Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics*, Paul Carus translation [Chicago, 1926], p. 25).

⁴⁴ The best statement of the analytical method as applied to geometrical cognition is to be found not in the *Prolegomena*, which employs the analytic method exclusively, but in the second edition of the first *Critique*: "Geometry is a science which determines the properties of space synthetically, and yet *a priori*. What, then, must be our representation of space in order that such knowledge of it may be possible? It must in its origin be intuition. . . . Further, this intuition must be *a priori*. . . . Our explana-

The principal objection to the analytic method is one already urged against the synthetic method, namely that its presuppositional procedure which claims to be demonstrative and to yield apodeictic certainty, is in reality a concealed use of the method of hypothesis. The theory of *a priori* forms is one among the possible ways of explaining the validity of mathematics—assuming of course that Kant is justified in attributing intrinsic truth to mathematical knowledge—but the merits of this hypothesis, in comparison with its rival or rivals, can only be determined by careful weighing of evidence. The analytical method is open to an additional objection not applicable to the synthetic method, namely that its whole procedure rests on the dogmatic acceptance of mathematics as a body of true propositions. The synthetic method on the other hand is not obliged to assume the validity of mathematics at the outset; indeed, the aim and goal of the synthetic method is a transcendental proof of the validity of mathematical science. The analytical method, unless taken in conjunction with the synthetic, entails a dogmatic rationalism entirely discordant with the critical spirit of Kant's philosophy.

The analytic procedure may perhaps be construed, not as an independent proof of the necessity and validity of *a priori* forms in experience, but merely as an adjunct to the synthetic method, which serves merely to verify the “deductive” argument described above.⁴⁵ The synthetic method having advanced “deductively” from *a priori* forms to *a priori* knowledge, the analytical method retraces the argument *presuppositionally* from *a priori* knowledge to *a priori* forms. The analytical method when it is regarded as merely auxiliary to and confirmational of the synthetical avoids the charge of dogmatism. But does it not achieve this at the price of circularity? Undoubtedly the combined synthetic-analytical method is circular for it advances from *a priori* forms to *a priori* knowledge and then from *a priori* truths to *a priori* forms, but, in so far as the analytic phase of the argument is construed not as an independent proof but merely verificatory of the third step in the synthetic method, the circle is not vicious.

tion is thus the only explanation that makes intelligible the *possibility* of geometry, as a body of *a priori* synthetic knowledge” (p. 70 [B49f.]).

⁴⁵ *Supra*, pp. 26-31.

Numerous criticisms, favorable and unfavorable, of Kant's transcendental argument have been suggested in the course of the foregoing analysis. I shall in these concluding paragraphs bring these criticisms together and seek in the light of them to assess Kant's contribution to philosophical methodology.

The radical empiricism of Kant's starting-point is fundamentally sound: immediate perceptual or introspective experience and the body of inductive scientific truth which ultimately rests on such perceptual and introspective evidence afford the only possible point of departure for philosophical enquiry. Systems of dogmatic rationalism which profess to dispense altogether with empirical analysis invariably appeal to experience even though unconsciously and surreptitiously. Kant's analysis of experience is, moreover, remarkably penetrating and circumspect for it succeeds in differentiating all the major factors in perceptual and introspective situations. Kant's analysis of factuality surpasses in thoroughness, accuracy, and discernment any to be found in the literature of empiricism and may be accepted as substantially correct even by one who repudiates the transcendental and idealistic constructions imposed by Kant upon his initial analysis. Every perceptual and presumably every introspective object is found to contain (1) sense qualia, (2) spatial distribution and arrangement of qualia, (3) temporal relations of coexistence and succession, and (4) categorial relations of thinghood, causality, and the like.

Kant's procedure becomes more questionable as soon as he embarks upon his retrospective journey from the empirically given to its necessary presuppositions since, from the *de facto* characteristics of experience, absolute necessity cannot be elicited. Any inference from factuality to necessity, however cleverly and ingeniously framed, is fallacious. Kant's transcendental argument reduced to its barest essentials is this: The formal ingredients of experience, space, time, and the categories are *a priori* necessary because without them experience itself would be impossible. But how can Kant ascertain the impossibility of an experience devoid of its formal traits? To say that such an experience is unimaginable proves nothing except perhaps a psychological limitation of the human imagination. To attempt actually to eliminate the formal ingredients of experience to determine whether, as a consequence, experience itself collapses is simply not feasible—the

very suggestion of such a philosophical experiment is a manifest absurdity. The absolute indispensability to experience of space, time, and the categories can be established neither by a thought-experiment nor by a real experiment. The critical examination of experience proves only that experience does in fact possess certain formal, pervasive features and that if it were deprived of any one of these essential features, it would be an altogether different experience from that with which we are familiar. The propositions: "All perceptual objects are spatial, temporal, and categorial" and "All introspective objects are temporal and categorial" are highly probable inductive generalizations, not, however, *a priori* truths. Necessity and apriority—whether of forms or of propositions—cannot be grounded in factuality.

Kant's idealistic prepossession intrudes into the transcendental argument when the mental *a priori* is superimposed upon the logical *a priori*. Apriorism and idealism are conjoined in Kant's epistemology, but their union is perfectly arbitrary. Why is necessity more surely guaranteed by a pervasive space or a pervasive category which is a determination of the mind than one which is a determination of the object? Realism affords just as good—although admittedly no better—a ground for apriorism than does idealism. On either theory, the universality of the formal ingredients of experience can be nothing more than a *de facto* pervasiveness, and their necessity only conditional and hypothetical. Idealism, as an explanation of the *a priori*, is a metaphysical hypothesis, which must compete on terms of equality with its rival hypotheses. The theory of the subjectivity of space, time, and the categories is one among a number of philosophical hypotheses to account for their pervasiveness in experience. Kant's presuppositional argument for idealism is accordingly the hypothetical method masquerading as demonstrative proof.

Kant's idealism if translated from logical and transcendental into psychological and genetic terms often yields valuable insights. Undoubtedly ideal elements play an important rôle in the constitution of perceptual and introspective objects. The correlation of sense data derived from different senses, the imaginative supplementation of immediately given data by remembered data of the same or a different sense, the unification of sense qualia into "things" and their assimilation to the whole conceptual and cat-

egorial framework of our knowledge, are processes which involve the ideal and imaginative activity of the mind. Even the doctrines of the transcendental unity of apperception and of the productive imagination acquire new meaning and significance when interpreted in terms of individual empirical self-consciousness. These recondite doctrines owe whatever plausibility they possess to the psychological insights which they conceal beneath their formal exterior and are entirely meaningless unless construed as descriptions of the functioning of individual minds in their apprehension of phenomenal objects. Kant's philosophy would be far more available for the use of contemporary thinkers when the whole transcendental paraphernalia is abandoned and its insights are expressed in the language of present-day psychology and epistemology.

In passing final judgment on the transcendental method, we must dispute Kant's claim to having evolved a new and distinctive method of philosophical enquiry—a method reducible neither to the inductive method of generalization from experience nor the analytical, demonstrative method of mathematics and logic. Students of Kant have too readily acquiesced to his claim that the transcendental method is a philosophical method *sui generis* because of the originality, ingenuity, and impressiveness of the argument. Kant repeatedly affirms that the critical or transcendental method is not a mere refurbishing of the methods of natural or mathematical science, but a close examination of his peculiar and distinctive argument, the proof by presuppositions, has disclosed that when it has any cogency whatsoever, it is nothing but the method of hypothesis in disguise. But in disclaiming the novelty and originality of the transcendental method, we must not be blinded to Kant's ingenious epistemological hypotheses and to the penetrating analyses of philosophical concepts which he achieved without—one is tempted to say in spite of—the transcendental methodology.

II

NATURAL SCIENCE AND THE CRITICAL
PHILOSOPHY OF KANT

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NATURAL SCIENCE AND THE CRITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF KANT

KANT'S relation to natural science is somewhat paradoxical. No one has done more than he to give the impression that a line can be drawn between science and philosophy setting off a domain for the latter which can be investigated by itself. Yet nothing more emphatically demonstrates the impossibility of such a separation than Kant's actual life and the final fate of his philosophy. A consideration of his pre-critical writings in their bearing upon the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and of developments in mathematics and physics since his time will serve to make this clear.

Kant's Pre-Critical Works

Kant's first publication¹ appeared in 1746. It was concerned with the concept of the force of a moving body, and the controversy which had broken out with respect to it between Leibniz and the Cartesians. Kant's particular treatment, which affirmed Descartes to be correct for the force of a body considered in the mathematical sense, and Leibniz, when the body is considered in its physical sense, need not concern us. The important point is that Kant's first interest was in the fundamental concepts of the physical science of his time.

One other point is notable. Starting with Leibniz' relational theory of space, Kant writes: "It is easily proved that there would be no space and no extension, if substances had no force whereby they can act outside themselves. For without a force of this kind there is no connection, without this connection there is no order, and without this order no space." He then attempts to show that the three dimensions of space "arise from the fact that substances in the existing world so act upon one another that the strength of the action holds inversely as the square of the distances." This law, however, is quite arbitrary. It is possible to conceive bodies acting

¹ *Gedanken von der wahren Schätzung der lebendigen Kräfte und Beurteilung der Beweise, Immanuel Kants Werke*, herausgegeben von Ernst Cassirer (Berlin, 1912), Bd. I, pp. 1-196. Hereafter, this edition of the *Werke* will be referred to as *I.K.W.*

according to a different law, in which case "an extension with other properties and dimensions would have arisen." "A science of all these possible kinds of space," Kant adds, "would undoubtedly be the highest enterprise which a finite understanding could undertake in the world of geometry." This is quite surprising, coming from one whom we are prone to think of as insisting upon only one possible form for space. An equally surprising physical theory of the basis of the form of our spatial intuition follows: "The impossibility, which we observe in ourselves, of representing a space of more than three dimensions seems to me to be due to the fact that our soul receives impressions from without according to the law of the inverse square of the distance."²

A recent article, entitled "The Physiological *A Priori*," by the distinguished Dutch pharmacologist and physiologist, the late Professor Rudolf Magnus, is of interest in this connection. Magnus begins his paper with a reference to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. After briefly indicating its theory of the forms of sensibility and the categories of the understanding, he adds, "Kant's *a priori*, naturally, ought to be considered mainly philosophically-psychologically, as a factor of our psyche. It soon became clear, however, that a part of these *a priori* factors of our intellectual power must have a physiological basis."³ It appears that this was precisely Kant's theory in his first published work. We shall see when we consider his psychiatric papers that the physical, physiological, and cortical basis of the forms of sensibility and the categories of the understanding becomes even more explicit.

Kant's second paper (published 1754) reveals him as a scientist applying the theoretical principles of Newtonian physics to the solution of a problem set by the Royal Academy of Science in Berlin. The question is *Whether the Earth in Its Rotation on Its Axis Has Undergone Any Change since the Time of Its Origin*.

After indicating the impossibility of solving the problem by a purely empirical historical study, Kant turns to a theoretical analysis in the light of Newtonian principles. Upon the basis of Newton's laws he indicates that the earth, once in existence rotating with a certain velocity, "would forthwith persist with the

² *I.K.W.*, Bd. I, pp. 21f.

³ Rudolf Magnus, *Lane Lectures on Experimental Pharmacology and Medicine* (Stanford 1930), pp. 94-103.

same velocity and direction in infinite time, if no impediment or external cause were present to retard or accelerate it." He then shows by implicit appeal to Newton's second law that such an external force actually exists and is such that "it lessens the motion of the earth little by little and tends in immeasurably long time completely to destroy the rotation."⁴ Such would be the case were astronomical space filled with repellent matter. This, he says, Newton has shown "in a most compelling way."

In a few sentences with the aid of Newton's deductive theory, Kant has solved a problem which in the previous paragraph he had shown to be insoluble by a purely empirical method.

The wonder of all this does not fail to impress Kant. He adds: "This event [the future annihilation of the earth's rotation] which will sometime come to pass, is so important and remarkable, in that, although the future point at which it will occur is set so far away that even the capacity of the earth's surface itself to be inhabited and the duration of human beings attains perhaps not a tenth part of this time, nevertheless, the certainty of this predetermined fate and the continuous approximation of nature to the same is a worthy object of wonder and inquiry."⁵

The importance of this for Kant's later philosophy becomes explicit if we ask two questions: (1) Why does Newtonian mechanics enable Kant to know this future humanly unobservable event as predetermined? The answer is, because the principle of causality holds in Newtonian mechanics. Given an empirical designation of the present state of a system its state at any future time is unequivocally determined. (2) Why is the prediction of a future event "ten times more distant" than the habitability of the earth's surface so remarkable? May it not be because it shows that causality, as it actually appears in physical science, cannot be regarded as an abstraction from what we observe, but is instead a form by means of which we relate the present state of a system to future states of the system which, by their very nature, are beyond the reach not only of our own but any future person's sensuous observation?

⁴ *I.K.W.*, Bd. I, p. 192.

⁵ *ibid.*, *I.K.W.*, Bd. I, p. 192.

This paper is important also from a technical point of view. It contains an exact theory of the tides, and demonstrates a pull of the moon slightly retarding the earth's motion in addition to its tidal influence on the water upon the earth's surface. In 1897 Lord Kelvin refers to scientific items in this paper as not merely original with Kant but as "really great."⁶ These considerations direct Kant's attention to a criterion for determining the relative ages of the earth and the moon. This suggests a method for determining the natural history of the heavens and leads to his discovery of the nebular hypothesis. The paper ends with the statement that such a theory has been completed by him and will be published soon.

Meanwhile Kant's paper on the physical aging of the earth appeared.⁷ It exhibits his intense liking for physical geography. Wide knowledge of empirical details is evidenced. It treats of the earth arising out of chaos in a fluid mass, with the salt water of the sea, with the earth's atmosphere, and with biological life upon its surface. References to explicit geographical regions and to the work of others is present. The reasoning is quantitative as well as qualitative.

In 1755 his remarkable treatise on the theory of the heavens was published.⁸ The nebular hypothesis is clearly formulated upon the basis of Newtonian principles, and consequences are developed with respect to the mechanical origin of the world, the origin of specific planetary systems, the eccentricity of planetary orbits, the origin of comets, and the general theory and history of the sun. For brilliance of imaginative conception combined with the rigor prescribed by restriction to the principles of Newtonian mechanics this is one of the greatest achievements in the history of science. It was published by Kant when Laplace was but six years old.

His plan and logic appear in the preface: "I accept the matter of the whole world at the beginning in a state of general dispersion, and make of it a complete chaos. I see this matter forming itself in accordance with the established laws of attraction, and modifying its movements by repulsion. I enjoy the pleasure, without having recourse to arbitrary hypotheses, of seeing a well-ordered whole

⁶ Lord Kelvin, "The Age of the Earth," *Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institute for 1897* (Washington, 1898), p. 7.

⁷ *Die Frage, ob die Erde veraltet, physikalisch erwogen* (1754), *I.K.W.*, Bd. I, pp. 197-217.

⁸ *Allgemeine Naturgeschichte und Theorie des Himmels*, *I.K.W.*, Bd. I, pp. 219-370.

produced under the regulation of the established laws of motion, and this whole looks so much like that system of the world which we have before our eyes, that I cannot refuse to identify it with it.”⁹ Whereas the earlier paper on the earth’s rotation used the principle of causality to determine directly a future state, here the principle is used to determine indirectly a distant past state of the universe from a knowledge of its present condition. Again the causal concept is taking one far beyond what is immediately sensed.

Kant’s acceptance of mechanical causation was thoroughgoing. He aimed “to develop the constitution of the structure of the world from a single state of nature merely through mechanical laws.”¹⁰ Newton had appealed to God to preserve the stability of the astronomical orbits in those cases where he had been unable to deduce certain detailed empirical irregularities in planetary motion upon the basis of his principles. Kant writes that “the guidance of an immediate divine regulation renders this question no service,” and after treating the astronomical evidence in detail makes it a strong argument for his nebular hypothesis, that it renders unnecessary the introduction of such non-mechanical factors.¹¹ Again he anticipated Laplace.

Let us attempt to recapture the impression of surprise and wonder which this made upon Kant and his time. We have come to take the power of the principle of causality in Newtonian and Einsteinian mechanics so much for granted that it is easy to overlook the miracle which it performs. Here was Kant observing nature in the present in 1755 and, by means of the causal principle in Newton’s physics, able to know states and their transitions in nature so far distant in the past and the future that they cannot be observed by any human being. This is a procedure which every scientist takes for granted. Reflect on what it means with respect to the character of scientific knowledge. Observing what is given in the present through our senses, we are able to know distant, past and future, determinate states of nature which are not so sensed. Only one conclusion seems obvious: We know in science not

⁹ English translation by W. Hastie: *Kant’s Cosmogony* (Glasgow, 1900), p. 23.

¹⁰ *I.K.W.*, Bd. I, p. 236. The translation by Hastie entirely omits Kant’s phrase “blos durch mechanische Gesetze” from this sentence.

¹¹ *ibid.*, Bd. I, pp. 334-50.

merely what we sense but also much more by means of the concept of causality.

But causality is not the only scientific concept of this kind. In Chapter VII of Part II of *The Theory of the Heavens* two others attract Kant's attention and wonder. This is the chapter in which the nebular hypothesis is developed, and in which Kant even suggests milky ways beyond ours, after the manner of our own Professor Shapley. The point of relevance for Kant's later critical philosophy is suggested by the chapter's title: *Of the Creation in the Whole Extent of Its Infinitude in Space as well as in Time*. Clearly, the only time given to the senses is that in the present. Yet in the nebular hypothesis science is dealing with space and time in their infinite extension within which that which is sensed now and here is but a local term. In short, the concepts of space and time as they actually appear in scientific theory are not observed relations between what is sensed, but forms joining what is sensed in the present to distant states of nature in the past and future which are not directly observable. More precisely, they are ordering relations by means of which what is sensed locally at different times is located as parts of a single system of nature.

Nor is this sheer fancy on Kant's part. "Attraction," he writes, "is just that universal relation which unites the parts of nature in one space."¹² Thus the notion of space as a totality follows directly out of Newton's concept of universal gravitation together with Leibniz' relational theory of space. With the principle of the conservation of *vis viva*, verified by Huygens, the transition of the states of nature from one into the other deterministically throughout all time and space follows. This, in fact, is precisely the line of reasoning which gives Kant the nebular hypothesis. What is impressing Kant is the remarkable capacity of scientific knowledge to give nature as a single system with infinite temporal and spatial extension, by ordering under the concepts of space and time the disconnected glimpses and the meager local regions given through the senses.

Between *The Theory of the Heaven* in 1755 and the famous *Inaugural Dissertation* in 1770, Kant published some eighteen papers and lengthier monographs. Of these, three are on earth-

¹² *I.K.W.*, Bd. I, p. 311.

quakes, one on the theory of the wind, one on the figures of the syllogism, three on natural science and metaphysical and logical principles related thereto, another on physical geography, two on natural theology, two on ethical topics, two on psychiatry, and a final, exceedingly important one on the basis of the distinction of regions in space. Continuously, Kant combines philosophical interest in basic assumptions and a mastery of deductively formulated scientific theory with the more complex inductive knowledge of a vast range of empirical details in natural history and abnormal psychology.

The first of these papers, *De Igne* (1755), is of interest. By it he gained his degree and forthwith qualified as lecturer in physics at the University of Königsberg. Officially, as well as in his intellectual development, Kant was a physicist before he became a philosopher. In this paper he develops a wave theory of light and heat, following Euler, whom he quotes. Thus, Kant was cognizant of field, as well as of Newtonian particle, physics.

Perhaps it is this issue between the monism of field theory and the pluralism of particle physics which determined Kant's main concern in this period. His next four papers treat of the relation between the unifying and diversifying factors in nature and thought. The *Monadologiam Physicam* (1756) notes the need, even in Newtonian particle physics, for two opposing forces, the one repellent, the other the universal, unifying force of gravitation. In *The False Subtlety of the Syllogistic Figures* (1762), after emphasizing the purely analytic character of formal reasoning, the analysis of subject-predicate propositions into distinguished terms unified by the copula in judgment, and the presence in any judgment concerning subject and predicate, as united, of an attendant negative judgment that the one is not the other, are indicated. The importance of not confusing physical opposition, as indicated in the paper of 1762, with logical negation, as involved in the principle of contradiction, is the major theme of *Negative Quantities in Philosophy*, published in 1763.

In the same year, appears the initial attack on the ontological argument¹³ and Kant's prize essay *Concerning Evidence of the*

¹³ *Der einzige mögliche Beweisgrund zu einer Demonstration des Daseins Gott*, I.K.W., Bd. II, pp. 69-172.

*Principles of Natural Theology and Morals.*¹⁴ The latter is indicative of the dominance of science in Kant's thinking. Twenty-one of its twenty-six pages are given to mathematics and science and to the thesis that "the genuine method in metaphysics is . . . the same as that which Newton introduced in natural science."¹⁵ The method of mathematics is synthetic; that of natural science and metaphysics, analytic. By synthetic, Kant means that one begins with intuitively given simples and by means of definitions arrives at the complex ideas of the science. In the case of mathematics these simples were space and number. By analytic, Kant means that one begins with complex, observed phenomena, and by means of analysis, arrives at the simples in terms of which the original complex data are to be defined.

In judging Kant's theory of mathematics it should be remembered that he died in 1804. At that time, number still meant natural number, and continuity was undefined, having only a denotative meaning. The generalization of the concept of number to include rationals, irrationals, and reals, and the rigorous definition of continuity, with the attendant reduction of mathematics to logic, did not come until Weierstrass, Dedekind, and Cantor, who were born in 1815, 1831, and 1845, respectively. Also, the latter theory has given rise to paradoxes, which certain (although by no means all), competent, contemporary mathematicians regard as unavoidable without returning to the Kantian conception of mathematical concepts as synthetic constructions from intuitively-given factors.¹⁶

In this period, Kant also published a remarkable classification of psychiatric types, according to whether individuals suffer from a disturbance of experience or of judgment concerning what is experienced. Again the bodily, physical basis of the forms of sensibility and judgment, suggested in Kant's first publication, appears. Nor is Kant unmindful of his extremely physiological theory of the forms of experience and knowledge. He writes: "I have called the defects in the power of knowledge diseases of the head [*Krankheiten des Kopfes*]. I have also attended only to the phe-

¹⁴ *Untersuchung über die Deutlichkeit der Grundsätze der Natürlichen Theologie und der Moral*, I.K.W., Bd. II, pp. 173-202.

¹⁵ I.K.W., Bd. II, p. 186.

¹⁶ cf. Max Black, *Nature of Mathematics* (New York, 1935), pp. 186-91.

nomena themselves in the mind, without attempting to spy out their root, which really lies in the body, and indeed may have its principal seat more in the digestive tract than in the brain."¹⁷ A few sentences later he charges those who would make psychical attitudes, such as haughtiness, the reason for mental disorders or insanity with heartlessness and with "confusing cause and effect." The causal relation is from the physiological to the mental and the epistemological, not the converse.

In *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer* (1766)¹⁸ this theory is developed for psychiatry in more detail, and used in accompaniment with a devastating sarcasm against those who believe in spiritual substances and immaterial relations between them. Assuming the Cartesian hypothesis that "all representations of the imagination are accompanied by certain movements in the nerve-tissue," Kant writes that "according to the common order of things, the lines indicating the direction of the movement, and accompanying the fantasies in the brain as their auxiliaries, must meet inside the brain and . . . consequently, the location of the picture in the subject's consciousness in the waking state must be placed inside of himself. If, therefore, I suppose that, by any accident or disease, certain organs of the brain are distorted . . . in such a manner that the nerve movements, vibrating harmoniously with certain fancies, occur according to such lines of direction as, continued, would meet outside of the brain, then the *focus imaginarius* would be placed outside of the thinking subject, and the image produced by mere imagination would be perceived as an object present to the external sense. . . . It is not astonishing, then, if the visionary believes to see or hear many a thing which nobody perceives besides him."¹⁹ The Swedenborgian is such a fellow, Kant suggests with biting sarcasm.

It is clear that physiological, psychiatric, and neurological considerations are making Kant aware that the world which a given man senses and knows is preconditioned by the body and brain which he brings to the awareness and knowledge of it. Indeed, it is in order to explain why certain psychiatric disturbances

¹⁷ *Versuch über die Krankheiten des Kopfes* (1764), *I.K.W.*, Bd. II, pp. 314-15.

¹⁸ *Träume eines Geistersehers*, *I.K.W.*, Bd. II, pp. 329-90.

¹⁹ English translation by E. F. Goerwitz, *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer* (London, 1900), pp. 79-81.

bances are not cured by reasoning with the patient that Kant uses the distinction between sensation and reason: "As the disease of the visionary concerns not so much the reason, as a deception of the senses, it will be easily recognized that the unfortunate subject cannot remove the delusion by any reasoning; for a true or apparent impression of the senses precedes all the judgments of the reason and carries with it immediate evidence, far excelling all other persuasion."²⁰ Since these diseases have their basis in the body, Kant's thesis at this stage of his thinking seems to be that the forms which the subject brings to awareness and understanding constitute not merely an epistemological but also a physiologically-defined *a priori*.

Such was the direction of Kant's thought, when a demonstration by Euler and certain discoveries made by Kant himself forced him to revise his theory of space. The importance of this revision can hardly be overemphasized, since it brought about that shift in the relation of priority between physiology and epistemology which the *Critique of Pure Reason* later develops systematically. Had this change in Kant's scientific theory of space not occurred he would have had a theory of the *a priori*, but one, like that of the late Professor Magnus, which is physiologically and neurologically based.

The crucial step is made in 1768 in the paper *On the First Ground of the Distinction of Regions in Space*.²¹ Here Kant rejects Leibniz' theory that space is the relatedness of the empirical content of the universe for Newton's absolute theory that space is that in which the material content is located. Forthwith it is impossible to identify the form of space with the structure of the nervous system and body which the observer brings to sense awareness, since the latter would define only a relational, not an absolute, space. Hence a non-physical and non-physiological, that is, a transcendental, basis must be assumed for the *a priori* form of absolute space. Once one is forced beyond the individual, empirical, physiological knower to a transcendental source for the *a priori* form of space, the same reasoning applies to the *a priori* form of time as well, and to any other scientific concepts not given through the senses.

²⁰ Goerwitz translation, p. 82.

²¹ *Von dem ersten Grunde des Unterschiedes der Gegenden im Raume*, I.K.W., Bd. II, pp. 391-400.

Thus it came about that Immanuel Kant, who found all his empirical knowledge of neurology, physiology, and psychiatry driving him to the thesis that the physical character of one's cortex and body defines an *a priori* which determines how one orders and understands what one senses, came, nevertheless, to write an epistemology of science in which a transcendental, impersonal formula of absolute, primitive, *a priori* concepts combined necessarily with the sensuous data in some unexplained way to define, as purely regulative concepts, what one means by the body, the nervous system, and the individual empirical self. Instead of physics and physiology defining the *a priori*, the *a priori* was made to define physics and physiology.

Two weighty considerations brought about Kant's rejection of the Leibnizian relational theory of space: one, a demonstration by the famous mathematical physicist, Euler; the other, certain empirical facts noted by Kant himself.

Euler, Kant writes, "brings to view the difficulty of assigning to the most general laws of motion a determinate meaning, should we assume no other concept of space than that obtained by abstraction from the relation of actual things."²² Euler's point was that on a relational theory of space there can be no space unless there are at least two bodies to serve as terms for the relation between them. Newton's first law of motion refers to the constant velocity preserved by a body not acted upon by external forces. Such a body would be the only one in the universe, since, were there even one other mass present, then, by virtue of Newton's principle of universal gravitation, there would be an external force present. Since Newton's first law, consequently, presupposes a meaning for the motion in space of a single mass, and since on a relational theory of space there is no meaning for space or motion unless there are at least two masses, Euler had no difficulty in convincing Kant that Newtonian mechanics is compatible only with the absolute theory of space in terms of which Newton formulated it.

This caused Kant to wonder whether purely geometrical properties of bodies, quite apart from those exhibited in their motion, do not enforce the same conclusion. "My aim," he writes in this

²² *On the First Ground of the Distinction of Regions in Space*, English translation by John Handyside (*Kant's Inaugural Dissertation and Early Writings on Space* [Chicago, 1929], p. 21).

treatise (1768), "is to investigate whether there is not to be found in the intuitive judgments of extension, such as are contained in geometry, an evident proof that *absolute space has a reality of its own, independent of the existence of all matter, and indeed as the first ground of the compositeness of matter.*"²³

He begins by indicating the dependence of our sensed distinctions of up and down, before and after, and right and left upon the relation of the sensed objects to the human body. Thus, notwithstanding the absolute space, of which Newton and Euler have convinced him and the existence of which he is about to attempt to demonstrate by reference to the purely geometrical properties of bodies, Kant recognized that sensed space is relative space. Moreover, sensed space is relative not to our minds but to our bodies. "Even our judgments about the cosmic region," he writes, "are subordinated to the concept we have of regions in general, in so far as they are determined in relation to the sides of the body."²⁴

Nevertheless, Kant affirms, certain facts force us to admit absolute space in addition to this sensed relative space. The science of biology reveals certain organisms which differ neither in size nor shape, but solely "in the definite direction in which the arrangement of the parts is turned."²⁵ In the one the turning is to the right, in the other, to the left.

The decisive fact centers in bodies which are "incongruent counterparts" of one another. Two bodies are "incongruent counterparts" when they are similar in size and proportion, yet the shape of one cannot be included in that of the other. The right and left hands are an example.

The remarkable thing about Kant's analysis is that he explicitly and correctly sees it as the initiation of that branch of mathematics, suggested by Leibniz, termed *analysis situs*, and that he states it in terms of the precise concepts of similar classes and similar relations of contemporary mathematic logic.

Consider the parts of the right hand as members of the class α and those of the left hand as members of the class β . Between the members of these two classes there is a one-one relation, R , for which α is the domain and β is the converse-domain. This relation,

²³ Kant, *On the First Ground, etc.*, Handside, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

²⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 22f.

²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 23.

R , Kant defines as follows: "From all points of its surface [e.g. the right hand] draw perpendiculars to a plane set over against it, and produce them just as far behind the plane as these points lie in front of it."²⁶ It follows, therefore, with respect to the relation joining the parts of one hand to those of the other that the two hands are similar. For two classes whose members are related by a one-one relation are similar.²⁷

Consider the relation between the parts within a given hand. Let R_R designate the spatial relation between the parts of the right hand and R_L that between those of the left hand. Two conditions are satisfied: (1) As indicated in the previous paragraph, any part in the right hand has a one-one correlate in the left. (2) If any part x in the right hand stands in the relation R_R to any part y in the right hand, then the one-one correlates of x and y in the left hand are related to each other by the relation R_L . These two conditions are necessary and sufficient to insure that the relation R_R between the parts of the right hand is similar to the relation R_L between the parts of the left hand.²⁸

Consequently, on the relational theory of space, when we consider the relation between the parts of a given hand or the relation between the parts of one hand and those of the other, the two hands are similar. Yet the fact remains that they are different, "namely that the surface which bounds the one cannot possibly bound the other, . . . however one may turn and twist it",²⁹ a right-hand glove will not fit a left hand. Kant has no alternative but to conclude that the relational theory of space, considered as the sole theory, leads to consequences which "contradict the most obvious experience." Were it true "incongruent counterparts" would not exist.

No alternative remained for Kant but to accept the absolute theory of space. This conclusion was forced upon him by empirical, purely geometrical evidence as well as by the mechanical considerations demonstrated by Newton and Euler. "It is evident," writes Kant, "that instead of the determinations of space following from the positions of the parts of matter . . . these latter follow

²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 26.

²⁷ cf. B. Russell, *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy* (New York, 1920), p. 16.

²⁸ cf. *ibid.*, pp. 53f.

²⁹ Kant, *On the First Ground, etc.*, Handyside, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

from the former. . . . A reflective reader will accordingly regard as no mere fiction that concept of space which the geometer has thought out and which clear-thinking philosophers have incorporated into the system of natural philosophy."³⁰ Unquestionably the latter reference is to Newton.

Against his initial inclination and avowed position, Kant has been forced by empirical evidence to that distinction between sensed, relative and postulated, absolute space which is indicated by Newton in the *Principia*. "I must observe," writes Newton, "that the common people conceive these quantities [time, space, place, motion] under no other notions but the relation they bear to sensible objects. And thence arise certain prejudices, for the removing of which it will be convenient to distinguish them into absolute and relative true and apparent, mathematical and common. . . . Absolute space, in its own nature, without relation to anything external, remains always similar and immovable. Relative space is some movable dimension or measure of the absolute spaces which our senses determine by its relation to bodies."³¹ It is to be emphasized, however, that Kant was no slavish follower of Newton. Initially, he held the Leibnizian relational theory of space; he came to the Newtonian position only when forced by Euler's demonstration and his own empirical findings concerning incongruent counterparts.

The latter fact is the static equivalent of the dynamical fact of rotational motion which Newton made an empirical argument for absolute space. Newton's rotating bucket³² and Foucault's pendulum exhibit in motion the turn of the parts of a physical system, just as the right and left hands exhibit it statically. This evidence is weighty. It is one of the anomalies of our own scientific situation that its relational theory of space as left by Einstein and the physicists is not reconciled with the empirical evidence which Newton and Kant brought forward as proof of its inadequacy.³³ We shall return to this point when we consider the present status of Kant's science and philosophy.

³⁰ Kant, *On the First Ground, etc.*, Handyside, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

³¹ Newton, *Principia*, Cajori edition (Berkeley, 1934), p. 8.

³² *ibid.*, pp. 10f.

³³ cf. W. de Sitter: "On the relativity of inertia," *Proc. Royal Acad. Sc. Amsterdam*, Vol. XIX², pp. 1217-25, and also *Monthly Notices Royal Astron. Soc. London*, Vol. LXXVIII, pp. 3-6.

The development of Kant's thought through his paper of 1768 may now be summarized. Theories such as the nebular hypothesis showed that physics uses concepts like time, space, and causality in the sense not of an observed relation abstracted from *sensa*, but of an ordering relation extending into the infinite past and future by means of which what is locally sensed is related to past and future determinate states of the world so far distant as to be by their very nature unobservable. In short, there are scientific concepts derived from what is sensed and other scientific concepts not so derived. Physiological, neurological, and psychiatric considerations, particularly in the case of insane people, also indicate that the way one senses or understands one's world is determined not merely by the data given *a posteriori* through the senses but also by the structure of one's cortex and body which one brings, one may say *a priori*, to sense awareness. Newton's and Euler's mechanical, and Kant's purely geometrical, demonstration of absolute space showed, however, that this subjective form of space could no longer be conceived as a physiological *a priori* since the relatedness of the physical body and nervous system which the observer brings to sense awareness would provide merely a relational theory of space, whereas the *a priori* form required by empirical geometry and physics is that of absolute space. No alternative seemed to remain, therefore, but to treat the scientific concept of absolute space as not merely *a priori* but also as primitive and transcendental, rather than as the physically and physiologically based *a priori* in terms of which Kant first conceived it.

This is what Kant means when at the end of the paper of 1768, he writes: "Absolute space is not an object of outer sensation, but a fundamental concept which first makes all such sensation possible."³⁴ The term "fundamental" is the key word. By it he means a primitive concept used to define others but not itself definable. Instead of the relation between physical objects, designated by the inverse square law, determining the three-dimensional form of our spatial intuition, as Kant suggested in his first paper, or instead of the structure of the observer's brain and body defining a physiological *a priori* which he brings to sense awareness for the ordering of its data, as he suggested in his psychiatric papers, the *a priori*,

³⁴ Kant, *On the First Ground, etc.*, Handyside, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

primitive, unsensed, non-physiological, and hence transcendental concept of absolute space is essential to the definition of what we mean by physics and physiology and by any empirical subject or object.

It would be strange indeed if space were the only scientific concept of this kind. In his *Reflections*, Kant tells us that the next year, 1769, "brought great light" and that before the *Inaugural Dissertation* (1770) he "had already got an idea of the influence of the subjective conditions of knowledge upon our knowledge of objects, which was soon followed by the distinction of the sensible from the intellectual conditions."³⁵

That the *Inaugural Dissertation* gives to time the same treatment which the paper of 1768 had given to space hardly surprises us. Newton placed both upon the same basis: "Absolute, true and mathematical time," Newton writes, "of itself, and from its own nature, flows equably without relation to anything external."³⁶ The time which is sensed does not flow uniformly. Thus, the concept of time of physics is not the concept of time given through the senses. Also, as we have noted, the nebular hypothesis made Kant aware that physics uses time in the sense of an ordering relation joining local, sensed, present time to past and future states of the world which by their very nature are not sensed. Consequently, "The idea of time," as actually used in scientific theory, "does not originate in the senses, but is presupposed by them."³⁷

There are additional scientific concepts of this kind. The nebular hypothesis is concerned with the changes in the astronomical universe as a whole through past, present, and future states of the system. The remarkable thing about Newtonian, astronomical dynamics is its predictive power. Given the present state of the system, a unique state at any specified future time is unqualifiedly determined. Positivists and pragmatists emphasize the importance of predictive power in scientific theory, without which verification by appeal to what happens in the future is not possible. Yet the unambiguous predictive power, necessary to prevent a given

³⁵ B. Erdmann, *Reflexionen Kants* (1884), II, §§4 and 6. Quoted by E. Caird, *The Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant* (Glasgow, 1909), Vol. I, p. 150.

³⁶ Newton, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

³⁷ Kant, *De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis* (1770) [I.K.W., Bd. II, pp. 401-36], Handyside, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

hypothesis from being so vague and elastic as to fit any future fact which turns up, is not present unless causality holds, and, as the positivists' own philosopher Hume made Kant aware, causality in this unambiguous sense is not given through the senses.

The same is true of the physicists' concept of a physical object, which Kant termed a material substance. The sun in astronomical science is a three-dimensional collection of particles; the sun given to the senses is a two-dimensional colored patch.

It is easy enough to develop a theory of the source of the meaning of all scientific concepts, providing one supposes epistemology can be pursuable by itself, and then, adopting a simple-minded theory, brands as nonsense all that does not fit it. It is quite a different thing to know scientific theory at first hand, as did Kant, and then to fit one's epistemological theory to the distinction between scientific concepts which do derive from what is sensed and those which are so defined by the postulates of verified scientific theory as to be different from what the senses give. Regardless of one's final verdict with respect to Kant's philosophy it at least has this none too common merit.

Kant's intimate knowledge of science shows at one other point in his *Inaugural Dissertation*. He distinguishes the relation between the masses of a physical system from the relation between the states of the system, noting quite correctly that causality is never a relation between one mass or part of the system and another but between different states of the system of masses as a whole at different times. The relation between the masses of the system, he terms "coordination"; that between the states of the system at different times, he calls "subordination," meaning thereby the relation of cause and effect.³⁸

The state of a system changes with time, but the relation of "coordination" between the masses of the system is constant through all these changes of state. Newton's inverse square law of universal attraction and his laws of motion define the relation of coordination. These laws are constant through time. This is the reason why causality holds in the science. Since the relation of coordination determines everything that happens in the system and since it does not change with time, the future state of the

³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 39.

system is unequivocally determinable from what is given now. As Kant put it: "This form [coordination], as being essential to the world, is immutable, and is not liable to any alteration. . . . Every change [i.e. of state] presupposes the identity of the subject whose determinations follow one upon another. The world, therefore, as it remains the same world through its successive states, retains the same fundamental form; identity of the parts does not suffice for identity of the whole; there is required the identity of the characteristic composition."³⁹ The latter is given by Newton's laws.

This distinction between "coordination" and "subordination" gained from his first-hand participation in the discovery of verified scientific theory, enabled Kant to avoid two common errors. The metaphysical philosopher who speaks of the moon "causing" an acceleration in the earth, and who gets into countless difficulties over the "causal action" of one billiard ball upon another, has confused causality, which is a relation between states of a system at different times, with "coordination," which is the relation between one part of the system and another. The pure empiricist, the positivist, and the process philosopher, on the other hand, who attempt to locate the meaning of all scientific concepts and laws in the temporal relation between what is successively sensed, commit a confusion in the opposite direction by identifying the relation of coordination between the parts of a system remaining constant through time, to which the laws of physics refer, with the temporal relation between the states of the system, and with the latter in the denotatively and sensuously given meaning of mere contiguity and succession instead of the theoretically deduced and indirectly verified, postulated meaning of unequivocal, necessary, causal connection. More than one contemporary epistemology and philosophy of science would go into the waste basket, if its author, instead of starting with some apparently plausible but preconceived theory of the source of all scientific concepts and then fitting science to his theory, began with scientific theory itself and analyzed it carefully enough to discover Kant's distinction between "coordination" and "subordination."

The *Inaugural Dissertation* has one more major thesis. Although the scientific concepts of physical object (substance), causality,

³⁹ Kant, *De mundi, etc.*, Handyside, *op. cit.*, pp. 49.

space, and time are not those given through the senses and hence are *a priori*, space and time differ from the others in that for Kant they define existence. To have objective existence is to be present in space and time. This was true in classical, modern physics. To be a real physical object rather than merely a hallucinatory, phenomenal object in sensed space, was, as Newton put it, to be "placed in [absolute] time as to order of succession; and in [absolute] space as to order of position."⁴⁰

But existence involves particularity. It follows, therefore, Kant argued, that the scientific concepts of absolute space and time must be not merely *a priori* but also singular. It is precisely in this singularity that Kant's distinction between the "forms of sensibility" and the "categories of the understanding" consists. This unique singularity, permitting them to designate particular existence, is what Kant means when he calls space and time "pure intuitions." "Pure intuition," he writes, "is not a universal or logical concept *under* which, but a singular concept *in* which, all sensibles are apprehended."⁴¹

This point is very important. Because substance and causality are abstract universals, they cannot be used to define ontologically existent objects. In this, their status, as purely regulative, has its basis. The way in which this avoids the epistemological difficulties in which the treatment of scientific objects as ontological entities engulfed the followers of Locke needs no comment.

With this the basic distinctions sufficient to permit one to write the *Critique of Pure Reason* are at hand. To be sure the antinomies in which rival theories involve themselves bolster the argument, but they are not required. The inseparable connection between Kant's knowledge of science and his critical philosophy may be considered, therefore, as established. One might support this conclusion from the *Critique* itself, or from even later works such as the *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft*,⁴² published in 1786, in which Kant gives one hundred and ten pages to a systematic analysis of Newton's mechanics, but the result would be merely to establish for the whole of Kant's life what has been

⁴⁰ Newton, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

⁴¹ Kant, *De mundi, etc.*, Handyside, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

⁴² I.K.W., Bd. IV, pp. 367-478.

shown to be the case up to the writing of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

The Present Status of Kant's Science and Philosophy

It might be supposed, since Kant's shift from the relational to the absolute theory of space played such a crucial rôle in the construction of his philosophy, that the return of contemporary physics to the relational theory of space and time would dispose of Kant's epistemology. Such a summary conclusion would, however, overlook many factors.

First, incredible as it may seem, contemporary, relativistic physicists, notwithstanding their impressive logical and empirical arguments for the relational theory of space and time, have yet to give an adequate account of the equally evident empirical facts (i.e. rotational motion and incongruent counterparts) which Newton and Kant designated as rendering the relational theory untenable. Einstein first supposed that the Foucault pendulum experiment, giving evidence upon the earth itself of its rotation, could be explained on the Machian hypothesis that it demonstrates rotation, but rotation relative to the fixed stars rather than to absolute space. One of the most competent relativistic cosmologists, de Sitter, has pointed out, however, that astronomical evidence renders the Machian hypothesis untenable, so much so that Einstein later abandoned it.⁴³ None of the recent relativistic cosmological theories have improved upon this situation. It is one of the merits of the amendment to traditional physical theory proposed by the writer⁴⁴ that it meets this difficulty upon the basis of a relational theory of space.

Let us suppose then that it is possible to make the relational theory of space consistent with Newton's and Kant's evidence. Even so, the Kantian philosophy cannot be immediately dismissed. The crucial significance of absolute space for the initial point of the Kantian epistemology was not so much that it was absolute as that it conclusively established the fact that science uses concepts not given by the senses. But on the latter point Einstein's physics does not differ from Newton's. The relative space and time of

⁴³ de Sitter, *loc. cit.*

⁴⁴ "Two Contradictions in Current Physical Theory and their Resolution," *Proc. Nat. Acad. of Sciences*, Vol. XVI, No. 1 (January 1934), pp. 55f.

Einstein's theory is no more to be identified with the relative space and time given to the senses than was the absolute space and time of Newtonian mechanics. Newton's reason for distinguishing the time of physical theory from sensed time was that the former flows uniformly whereas the latter does not. This is equally true in Einstein's physics. The only difference is that Einstein's verified theory calls for a unique equally flowing time for each frame of reference, whereas Newton assumed but one public equally flowing time, invariant for all frames. Thus the same need for Kant's distinction between the concept of time which is given by the senses, and the concept of time used in verified physical theory exists in Einstein's as in Newton's physics.

The same is true of space. Sensed space is twisted in all sorts of fantastic ways with the blurring of one's vision and the degree of one's astigmatism. The space of Einstein's theory has approximately uniform metrical properties, and from Galilean frames of reference it is absolutely isotropic.

Furthermore, space and time are necessarily restricted to the local extent of one's vision or touch and to a relatively brief present, whereas the space and time of relativity theory are postulated forms by means of which we order local regions and presently sensed occasions with respect to past and future states of nature so far distant that by their very nature they are not sensed. In fact, one of the most notable consequences of Einstein's theory is its revival of serious scientific concern with the structure of the universe considered as a whole over all space and all time, which so moved Kant in his own contemplation of the nebular hypothesis. To say that scientific concepts of space and time in this sense are mere abstractions from the restricted locus of our present sense awareness is obviously to place upon sense awareness greater demands than it can bear.

The same is true of causality. There is some question of the extent of its validity in quantum mechanics. Professor Margenau⁴⁵ and the writer,⁴⁶ among others, have given reasons for believing that causality holds even in quantum theory. But in relativity physics there is no question. All agree that causality holds as

⁴⁵ *Journal of the Philosophy of Science*, 1934, pp. 134ff.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 215-32 and Vol. V, pp. 166-80.

unequivocally in Maxwell's and Einstein's field physics as it did in Newtonian particle physics. Yet, as Professor Einstein noted in the symposium on this topic at the Princeton meeting of the American Philosophical Association in 1937, Hume showed that causality is not given through the senses. It is still necessary, therefore, to agree with Kant that there are scientific concepts not referring to what is given through the senses.

When we pass, however, to the second Kantian thesis, namely, that since space is not relational, the *a priori* scientific concept of space cannot be defined physically and physiologically as the contribution which the observer's cortex and body, as part of physical nature, brings to the deliverances of the sense organs, then the shift from Newton's absolute to Einstein's relational theory of space is significant. It permits the retention of the physiological *a priori* which Kant maintained in his earlier physical and psychiatric papers, and for which the late Professor Magnus has recently presented new experimental evidence.

Furthermore, the Kantian argument to the transcendental ego fails. One can no longer argue that space is absolute and, hence, that the *a priori* form of space cannot be assigned to the contribution of the empirical, physiological self since the latter would provide only a relational theory of space. For it is precisely the relational theory which the contemporary scientific concept of space, even the one not given through the senses, requires.

The way is now open to regard the knower as a relational part of, and continuous with, physical nature. Thereby, the epistemological gulf between the knower and the known is avoided without resorting to the artifice of making scientific concepts regulative and of reducing the scientific objects of physics, physiology, and empirical psychology to the trivial status of the regulative presence of an empty, abstract formula of supposedly absolute concepts termed the transcendental ego. In short, the thesis of Kant's early scientific papers, that because of the character of the physical world of which his nervous system is a part and an essential expression, the observer brings to sense awareness a formal structure of his own which gives to what he apprehends and understands a character not completely derived from the senses, this thesis, to repeat, still stands; but the revolutionary thesis of his critical philosophy, that this *a priori* must be taken as primitive, and hence as de-

fining what we mean by the concepts of physics and physiology, instead of being defined by the latter, no longer holds. There is a physical and physiological, but not a transcendental, ego and *a priori*.

For a different but equally cogent reason, he also fails to establish his third contention that the scientific concepts of space and time are singular concepts. Developments in geometry and physics since his day have shown this to be false. The ontological argument no more holds for space and time than for God. There are many different forms of space and many different time-systems. Consequently, the concept of any one of them can no longer be regarded as singular. The forms of sensibility are on the same footing as the categories. As concepts, they are abstract universals.

The implications of this are far-reaching, more so than has been realized. First, we can have no theoretical assurance in advance concerning what concepts will define existence. It can no longer be assumed that space and time have this privileged status. All concepts have equal potentialities in this respect. Nor can immediate apprehension be taken as the criterion of existence. The insane asylums are full of people who suppose this to be the case. The existent can be distinguished from the hallucinatory only by deducing consequences from different theoretical possibilities and checking the results empirically. In the construction of these theoretical possibilities all concepts are on the same footing. There can be no *a priori* certainty ahead of time that only a theory formulated in terms of certain concepts, e.g. space and time, will be verified.

Once this is admitted, the Kantian and all too common notion of scientific concepts as regulative, rather than definitive, of the existent no longer holds. For if existence is not guaranteed by immediate apprehension but depends instead upon empirically testing the deductive consequences of different theoretical possibilities, and all concepts, those of substance and causality as well as space or time, are on the same footing in the definition of the theoretical possibility which is verified, then the scientific objects of the theory thus verified must be said to have existence and not to have a merely regulative status.

With the assignment of the subjective conditions of knowledge to an empirical, physiological knower continuous with, and within,

ontologically existent nature, the return to verified scientific theory as definitive of ontological existence presents no epistemological difficulties.

It must be concluded, therefore, that Kant's emphasis upon the subjective conditions of knowledge and the attendant presence of scientific concepts not derived completely from the senses still stands, but that the transcendental interpretation placed upon these subjective conditions by his critical philosophy, reasonable and necessary as it seemed in his day, is no longer justified on scientific grounds or necessary for epistemological reasons.

III

THE DOCTRINE OF OBJECTIVITY
IN LOCKE, HUME, AND KANT

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THE DOCTRINE OF OBJECTIVITY IN LOCKE, HUME, AND KANT

THREE is a widely accepted interpretation of the development of modern philosophy which holds that Locke's theory of ideas was reduced to scepticism by Hume and that Kant, in replying to Hume, disposed of the whole English empirical philosophy once and for all. Thus it is often assumed that Locke's theory of ideas led logically to Hume's sceptical conclusions and consequently in refuting Hume Kant also refuted Locke. I shall try to show that this interpretation fails to do justice to Locke's theory of ideas in that it constitutes an unwarranted simplification of that theory; that Hume's criticism of Locke applies only to one aspect of Locke's philosophy and leaves untouched another very important aspect of his argument; and that not only is this other phase of Locke's doctrine unaffected by Kant's criticism of Hume but is actually supported by Kant's central argument in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. I shall try to show also that the close relation of the philosophies of Kant and Locke is obscured by Kant's own interpretation of the consequences of the central argument of the *Critique*, and that this was occasioned by the fact that Kant's own interpretation of that argument was influenced by assumptions which, although fundamental to the *Critique* as a whole, do not influence directly the argument of the *Transcendental Deduction of the Categories*.

I

The general plan of Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding* was formulated under the influence of the Cartesian scheme of categories, and reflected the universal tendency of that period to explain complexes by reduction to their simple constituents. This was the method which Locke proposed to apply in his analysis of our ideas.¹ However, when Locke attempted

¹ "Ideas thus made up of several simple ones put together, I call *complex*." Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, ed. by A. C. Fraser (Oxford, 1894), Bk. II, Chap. xii, Sec. 1. All subsequent references to the *Essay* are to Fraser's edition.

the actual analysis of specific cases of ideas his analysis was often inconsistent with his general plan.² Thus we find that certain of Locke's "simple" ideas turn out to be complex,³ and many of his complex ideas are accounted for not as mere external combinations of simple ideas but as the result of various inferential interpretations that alter the contents of the original ideas.⁴

In this study we are directly concerned with the conflict between these two tendencies of Locke's argument only as it affects his treatment of simple ideas of sensation. In conformity with his general theory he sometimes refers to simple ideas of sensation as simple units, unanalyzable and ultimate entities given passively to the mind and constituting the objects of which the mind is aware in sense experience. Thus ideas of sensation are sometimes described as entities that somehow "have admittance" through the senses and are *conveyed* to the brain (which he describes as "the mind's presence-room") where they are *viewed* by the understanding.⁵ On the other hand, simple ideas of sensation are also considered to be ideas of particular things.⁶ Thus understood, they are apprehensions of objects that are not themselves ideas. From this standpoint it is the function of ideas of sensation to refer beyond themselves. As perceptual judgments they have lost the characteristics of simplicity and self-completeness that Locke had attributed to them in accordance with his formal scheme.

Locke considered such objective reference to be essential if our experience is to have cognitive significance. For "if our knowledge of our ideas terminate in them, and reach no further, where there is something further intended, our most serious thoughts will be of

² On the conflict between Locke's formal scheme and his treatment of specific problems, see Gibson, *Locke's Theory of Knowledge and its Historical Relations* (Cambridge, 1917), pp. 47, 49f., 52, 54, 73 and 325; and Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York, 1929), pp. 84f.

³ Space and duration, for example, "are justly reckoned amongst our *simple ideas*, yet none of the distinct ideas we have of either is without all manner of composition: it is the very nature of both of them to consist of parts" (Locke, *op. cit.*, Bk. II, Chap. xv, Sec. 9).

⁴ *ibid.*, Bk. II, Chap. xiii, Secs. 3 and 5 to 9; Bk. II, Chap. xiv, Sec. 6; Bk. II, Chap. xvii, Secs. 3, 5, 6; Bk. II, Chap. xxii, Secs. 1 and 2.

⁵ *ibid.*, Bk. II, Chap. iii, Sec. 1.

⁶ "Our Senses, conversant about particular sensible objects, do convey into the mind several distinct perceptions of things, according to those various ways wherein those objects do affect them" (*ibid.*, Bk. II, Chap. 1, Sec. 3). See also *ibid.*, Bk. II, Chap. iv, Secs. 1, 4, 5.

little more use than the reveries of a crazy brain; and the truths built thereon of no more weight than the discourses of a man who sees things clearly in a dream, and with great assurance utters them."⁷ Furthermore, ideas of sensation provide the foundation of all our knowledge of those substances of which Locke conceived the external world to be composed.⁸ The simple ideas which, when combined, form our ideas of substances have from the first a reference beyond themselves.⁹ The objective reference characteristic of our ideas of substances does not arise with or after the combination of simple ideas into complex ideas of substances. It is inherent in those simple ideas themselves. For "when our senses do actually convey into our understandings any idea, we cannot but be satisfied that there doth something *at that time* really exist without us, which doth affect our senses, and by them give notice of itself to our apprehensive faculties, and actually produce that idea which we then perceive: and we cannot so far distrust their testimony, as to doubt that such *collections* of simple ideas as we have observed by our senses to be united together, do really exist together."¹⁰ The objective reference which Locke attributes to simple ideas of sensation does not depend upon any process of explicit inference. The reference of ideas to an external thing is "a tacit supposition of their conformity to that thing."¹¹

That our ideas of sensation have a reference beyond themselves to an independent order of real existence was for Locke a basic intuition he never permitted himself to question seriously. He simply took it for granted, considering it to be bound up intrin-

⁷ *ibid.*, Bk. IV, Chap. iv, Sec. 2.

⁸ "Herein, therefore, is founded the reality of our knowledge concerning substances—That all our complex ideas of them must be such, and such only, as are made up of such simple ones as have been discovered to co-exist in nature" (*ibid.*, Bk. IV, Chap. iv, Sec. 12). See also *ibid.*, Bk. II, Chap. xxiii, Sec. 6.

⁹ Ideas of substances are obtained "by collecting *such* combinations of simple ideas as are, by experience and observation of men's senses, taken notice of to exist together; and are therefore supposed to flow from the particular internal constitution, or unknown essence of that substance" (*ibid.*, Bk. II, Chap. xxiii, Sec. 3). See also *ibid.*, Bk. II, Chap. xii, Sec. 6; Bk. III, Chap. v, Sec. 3.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, Bk. IV, Chap. xi, Sec. 9. ". . . the mind (as in most men I believe it does) judges these ideas to be in the things themselves" (*ibid.*, Bk. II, Chap. xxxii, Sec. 14).

¹¹ *ibid.*, Bk. II, Chap. xxxii, Sec. 4. "These suppositions the mind is very apt tacitly to make concerning its own ideas" (*ibid.*, Bk. II, Chap. xxxii, Sec. 6).

sically with our sense experience.¹² Although Locke did recognize that the claim of objective reference might be challenged by others and attempted to defend it,¹³ yet the manifest impatience with which he considered this problem makes it clear that he needed no such reassurance for himself.

II

The latent conflict in Locke's thought was revealed by Hume, who seized upon the formal scheme in terms of which Locke had proposed to develop his theory of ideas and brought out its implications in such a way as to exhibit clearly the opposition between it and Locke's assumption of objective reference. The first stage of Hume's attack is to deny that the objective reference which we attribute to our ideas and impressions has any basis in experience. His denial that experience carries with it a reference to anything beyond itself is quite explicit and unequivocal. "But to form the idea of an object, and to form an idea simply is the same thing; the reference of the idea to an object being an extraneous denomination, of which in itself it bears no mark or character."¹⁴

Hume's next step is to show that the objective reference which we attribute to our ideas is sustained by an inference, and that this inference is fallacious.

"That our senses offer not their impressions as the images of something *distinct*, or *independent*, and *external*, is evident; because they convey to us nothing but a single perception, and never give us the least intimation of any thing beyond. A single perception can never produce the idea of a double existence, but by some inference either of the reason or imagination. When the mind looks farther than what immediately appears to it, its conclusions can never be put to

¹² "It is therefore the *actual receiving* of ideas from without that gives us notice of the existence of other things" (*ibid.*, Bk. IV, Chap. xi, Sec. 2).

¹³ *ibid.*, Bk. IV, Chap. iv, Secs. 3, 4.

¹⁴ Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. by L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford, 1896), Bk. I, Pt. I, Sec. 7, p. 20. All subsequent references to the *Treatise* are to this edition. "Tis absurd . . . to imagine the senses can ever distinguish betwixt ourselves and external objects" (*ibid.*, Bk. I, Pt. IV, Sec. 2, p. 190). cf. Hendel, *Studies in the Philosophy of David Hume* (Princeton, 1925), p. 212: "Nor do we have a direct sense impression of an objective reality. It is quite obvious that no sensation can give us the existence of something continuing beyond itself." See also *ibid.*, pp. 112 and 114.

the account of the senses; and it certainly looks farther, when from a single perception it infers a double existence, and supposes the relations of resemblance and causation betwixt them.

"If our senses, therefore, suggest any idea of distinct existences, they must convey the impressions as those very existences, by a kind of fallacy and illusion. Upon this head we may observe, that all sensations are felt by the mind, such as they really are, and that when we doubt, whether they present themselves as distinct objects, or as mere impressions, the difficulty is not concerning their nature, but concerning their relations and situation."¹⁵

Belief in the existence of external objects is not given in impressions. Such belief does not form a part of any sense impression. It must therefore arise from some other source and have its foundation in something other than original impressions. Excluding impressions we have left only ideas and the processes of reason and imagination. To discover in what that belief consists we need only to look to the difference between ideas and impressions. Since ideas are in all cases copies of impressions, this difference cannot be found in the qualitative content of the two experiences. It must, therefore, be a quantitative rather than a qualitative difference, a difference of degree and not of kind. Hume finds this in the degree of vividness or vivacity with which impressions and ideas come. When, therefore, ideas involve a belief in existence it must be because they have acquired a vivacity and force approaching that possessed by impressions and which distinguishes them from less vivid ideas. This can occur only when ideas become associated with present impressions. The additional vividness is conferred upon the ideas by that association.¹⁶ The kind of association that

¹⁵ Hume, *Treatise*, Bk. I, Pt. IV, Sec. 2, p. 189.

¹⁶ "All the perceptions of the mind are of two kinds, viz. impressions and ideas, which differ from each other only in their different degrees of force and vivacity. Our ideas are copy'd from our impressions, and represent them in all their parts. When you wou'd any way vary the idea of a particular object, you can only encrease or diminish its force and vivacity. If you make any other change on it, it represents a different object or impression. . . . So that as belief does nothing but vary the manner, in which we conceive any object, it can only bestow on our ideas an additional force and vivacity. An opinion, therefore, or belief may be most accurately defined, A LIVELY IDEA RELATED TO OR ASSOCIATED WITH A PRESENT IMPRESSION" (*ibid.*, Bk. I, Pt. III, Sec. 7, p. 96). This belief is "a particular manner of forming an idea: And as

contributes the necessary vividness to our ideas is that of cause and effect.¹⁷

Thus Hume concludes that belief in objects distinct from our sense experience rests upon the relation of cause and effect. The justification of such belief therefore depends upon the justification of the contention that the relation of cause and effect holds good of external objects. This he finds impossible to accomplish. Neither cause and effect nor substance, the basic categories of traditional philosophy, can be founded either upon an appeal to experience or upon reasoning.

The scepticism which caps Hume's analysis follows his conclusion that there can be neither an empirical nor a rational warrant for the application of the traditional categories to experience. One of Hume's important contributions to the development of modern thought is to be found in the fact that he raised the question of the grounds of the objective reference of our sense experience and showed that it was bound up with the basic scheme of categories of modern philosophy. After this the objective reference of ideas could no longer simply be taken for granted.

III

One of the important consequences of Hume's argument was his demonstration that a merely given sense experience could not provide an adequate basis for the objective reference that Locke had attributed to our ideas of sensation. Locke had failed to grasp clearly the fundamental conflict between his assumption of objective reference and his formal scheme of ultimate given simples and their external combinations into complex ideas. It was Kant's task to show that Hume's conclusions could be avoided only by a new conception of sense perception and that this required a new conception of objectivity. The objective world no longer could be understood as that which is apprehended by means of passively

the same idea can only be vary'd by a variation of its degree of force and vivacity; it follows upon the whole, that belief is a lively idea produc'd by a relation to a present impression, according to the foregoing definition" (*ibid.*, Bk. I, Pt. III, Sec. 7, p. 97). See also *ibid.*, Bk. I, Pt. III, Secs. 5 and 13. "Here we must not be contented with saying, that the vividness of the idea produces the belief: We must maintain that they are individually the same" (*ibid.*, Bk. I, Pt. III, Sec. 9, p. 116).

¹⁷ ". . . the relation of cause and effect is requisite to persuade us of any real existence" (*ibid.*, Bk. I, Pt. III, Sec. 9, p. 109).

received sense impressions. From Kant's standpoint Locke was right in his fundamental intuition that our sense experience does have reference to a world of objects. But Locke was mistaken in assuming, uncritically, that this objective reference could be asserted consistently with an analysis of experience into merely given units. If experience is to put us in contact with an objective order Kant considered that it must be with an objective order that already includes the subjective and is continuous with it. The objective order cannot be a realm separate from the subjective and set over against the subjective. Thus Kant's problem was to develop a conception of experience in which objective reference would be involved from the very beginning and a conception of the objective order which would allow for continuity between the subjective and the objective. It was only by some such reconstruction of the traditional analysis of experience that Kant considered it possible to reinstate the factor of objective reference which Hume had stripped away from Locke's ideas of sensation.

In agreement with both Locke and Hume, Kant considered that the problem of objectivity is closely bound up with the causal relation. Locke had appealed to causality as the warrant of our belief in an external world. Hume had undermined the logical ground of that belief by his criticism of causality. So it was upon the causal relation that Kant placed his greatest emphasis in developing his doctrine of the categories, and in the argument of the *Transcendental Deduction of the Categories* we find Kant's formulation of the general principle upon which his reply to Hume's criticism rests.¹⁸

Hume had contended that since what we call the cause and what we call the effect are in every case two separate events, and are experienced as two separate events, it follows that one cannot be deduced from the other nor can we ever be justified in asserting that we know them to be connected by such a relation. We merely

¹⁸ Although Kant's detailed treatment of the causal relation is postponed to a later section of the *Critique*, and the doctrine of the "transcendental unity of apperception" is intended to serve as the foundation of his proof of the objective validity of all the categories, yet in his statement of the doctrine and in its exposition the causal relation is given a prominent place. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. by Norman Kemp Smith (London, 1929), pp. 124 (A90f.=B123), 124f. (A91=B123f.). All subsequent references to the first *Critique* are to this translation.

experience the succession of one and the other. The repetition of such experiences leads to the formation of a mental habit, an association, which expresses itself in the form of an expectation. Thus after repeatedly experiencing A and B in conjunction the experience of A leads to the expectation of B, and this expectation is all we can truly mean when we speak of them as causally connected.¹⁹

With the logic of Hume's argument Kant was in full agreement. If we experience A and B as genuinely separate events then there is no possibility of a rational justification of attributing to them, *a priori*, a causal connection.²⁰ Thus is exposed the fatal weakness of the orthodox rationalist tradition concerning the causal relation. But Hume's own criticism of that view Kant discovered was not carried far enough. The same critical analysis which undermined the rationalist doctrine of the causal relation would also, if carried further, destroy Hume's assumption that we can start with a consciousness of succession as simply given in experience.

Kant replied to Hume simply by showing that what Hume assumed to begin with, the experience of succession in time, presupposes what he denied, the validity of our application of the category of cause and effect to those events which are experienced in succession in time.²¹ The fact that our conscious experiences are temporal and that they are recognized by us as belonging to one time means that they are connected throughout.²² The recognition of the successive character of two experiences requires the reference of those experiences to an identical subject.²³ Just to the extent that our experience has a temporal character, to that extent all specific experiences will be recognized as belonging to an identical

¹⁹ Hume, *op. cit.*, Bk. I, Pt. III, Sec. 14.

²⁰ Since Hume "could not explain how it can be possible that the understanding must think concepts, which are not in themselves connected in the understanding, as being necessarily connected in the object . . . he was constrained to derive them from experience, namely, from a subjective necessity (that is, from *custom*), which arises from a repeated association in experience, and which comes mistakenly to be regarded as objective. But from these premises he argued quite consistently. It is impossible, he declared, with these concepts and the principles to which they give rise, to pass beyond the limits of experience" (Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 127 [B127]).

²¹ *ibid.*, pp. 224f. (A108ff.=B243f.). See Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'* (London, 1923), pp. 364, 366f., 369f.

²² Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 131 (A98f.).

²³ *ibid.*, p. 141 (A115f.). cf. *ibid.*, pp. 131f. (A99f.), 136f. (A107f.).

subject. But since even Hume grants the temporal character of experience, then that is not in question. Therefore, we can conclude that all our experience, as ours, must be recognized as the experience of an identical subject.

Since everything apprehended must, as a condition of its being apprehended, be apprehended as belonging to a single unified system of things and events, then it follows that no two events that are both objects of my experience can be experienced as ultimately separate.²⁴ Unless apprehended as related they would not be apprehended at all. Therefore the apprehension of what we call a single event is not the apprehension of something genuinely single, in the sense of existing in and of itself. It is the apprehension of something that, taken by itself, is incomplete, fragmentary, and dependent. In order that it may have a recognizable character for a conscious subject it must be interpreted in terms of, and recognized as belonging to, the single system of objects of possible experience. Hume had contended that there is no necessary connection between any two events designated as cause and effect. In principle, Kant's reply is that if we take events by themselves then we cannot be justified in asserting necessary connection. Events have necessary connection only in their relations as constituents of a system. The real issue, then, is whether events can be taken by themselves or whether they must be apprehended as united within a system. It was Kant's resolution of this problem to show, in the *Transcendental Deduction*, that events cannot be apprehended as events except as they are apprehended as belonging to a system.²⁵

As the argument of the *Deduction* unfolds it becomes clear that the categories, as forms of synthesis, are the modes by which Kant conceives reference to objects to take place.²⁶ The *Transcendental*

²⁴ "If each representation were completely foreign to every other, standing apart in isolation, no such thing as knowledge would ever arise. For knowledge is [essentially] a whole in which representations stand compared and connected" (*ibid.*, p. 130 [A97]). "There is one single experience in which all perceptions are represented as in thorough-going and orderly connection" (*ibid.*, p. 138 [A110]). See also *ibid.*, pp. 136 (A107), 137f. (A109f.), 141f. (A116).

²⁵ See especially *ibid.*, pp. 130f. (A97ff.), 136 (A107), 138 (A110), 141ff. (A116ff.).

²⁶ "The explanation of the manner in which concepts can thus relate *a priori* to objects I entitle their transcendental deduction" (*ibid.*, p. 121 [A85-B117]). The categories "are fundamental concepts by which we think objects in general for appearances, and have therefore *a priori* objective validity" (*ibid.*, p. 138 [A111]). cf. *ibid.*, pp. 130 (A96f.), 134ff. (A104ff.), 156f. (B137ff.).

Deduction is intended to show that such reference in terms of the categories is not accidental and arbitrary but is the necessary condition of any consciousness of objects.²⁷ Kant's conception of synthetical propositions is one way of expressing the idea of objective reference. The question of how *a priori* synthetic judgments are possible raises the question of how *a priori* judgments can refer to objects. But when Kant came to the consideration of this problem he found that it involved the broader question of how any idea can have reference to an object. *A posteriori* synthetic judgments at first presented no problem to him. But he came to see that reference to objects cannot be accounted for in terms merely of given elements of experience.²⁸

Locke had attributed a certain passivity to the mind in perception. If this means that objects are merely given, then Hume's conclusions follow. But the passivity which Locke claimed was of a limited character, applying only to any supposed conscious or deliberate synthesis in perception. He failed to distinguish between this and an absolute passivity, and sometimes referred to the limited passivity as if it were absolute. His failure to recognize the possibility of an activity which underlies conscious experience is probably the consequence of his prior assumption that there is nothing in the mind of which the mind is not conscious.²⁹ By exposing the weakness of Locke's assumption that there is nothing in the mind of which the mind is not conscious, Kant made it possible to bring out explicitly the transcendental activities that Locke had presupposed, but failed to recognize, in his account of our perception of objects. Thus Kant's argument goes behind Locke's starting-point, and this was made possible by the distinction Kant

²⁷ The categories "relate of necessity and *a priori* to objects of experience, for the reason that only by means of them can any object whatsoever of experience be thought" (*ibid.*, p. 126 [A93=B126]), cf. *ibid.*, pp. 125f. (A92=B125), 156f. (B138).

²⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 142ff. (A116ff.), 145ff. (A123ff.), 159 (B142).

²⁹ Locke, *op. cit.*, Bk. I, Chap. 1, Secs. 5, 22, 24; Bk. I, Chap. III, Sec. 21; Bk. II, Chap. ix, Secs. 1 and 4; Bk. II, Chap. x, Sec. 7. Gibson points out that Locke identifies the "mind's activity" with "voluntary action," and "its passivity in the reception of its simple ideas does not imply that these ideas are wholly determined from without, irrespective of any co-operation from itself." "A mental function . . . which is only elicited by the presence of an external stimulus, is for Locke only an indication of a 'passive power' in the mind, to the exercise of which it would be incorrect to apply the term activity" (Gibson, *op. cit.*, pp. 58f.). "All, then, that is signified by the passivity of the mind, in relation to its simple ideas, is that the nature of these primary contents is independent of our will" (*ibid.*, p. 60). cf. *ibid.*, pp. 55 and 277f.

drew between the constructive activities involved in experience and conscious experience as the product of those activities.³⁰

If we are justified in believing that one of the important functions of Kant's *Transcendental Deduction* was to reinstate the aspect of Locke's analysis of experience which had been rejected by Hume, then the question might be asked whether Locke had not started along a path which, if followed to the end, would have made Kant's *Transcendental Deduction* unnecessary. It may be remarked that the Scottish School had attempted just this, but with little success. It was Kant's argument that supplied what the Scottish criticism of Hume lacked. For Kant not only replaced what Hume had taken away from Locke's ideas of sensation, but he also provided what its removal had made necessary, a demonstration of the necessity of objective reference. Reid attempted to answer Hume by calling into question the premises from which Hume's conclusions followed. As Hume had developed one side of Locke's theory of knowledge, the tendency at times to treat ideas as mere presentations, so Reid developed the other side of Locke's theory, the tendency to treat ideas as judgments. The result was Reid's recognition that relations are intrinsic to what Locke called ideas. Reid thus contended that sense perception has objective reference from the very beginning.³¹ Reid, however, failed to grasp the problem raised by Hume and to perform the task made necessary by Hume's analysis. It was not enough to show that Hume's criticism led to conclusions in conflict with the meaning claimed by experience; nor was it sufficient to show that those conclusions might be avoided by beginning with a different analysis. What was needed was a demonstration that the factors eliminated by Hume's analysis are essential conditions of what Hume accepted as his starting-point. To explain "suggestion" as the effect of "the original constitution of our nature," as did Reid, is simply to deny Hume's conclusions by stating an alleged fact which implies the contrary.³² It is one thing to say that conscious experience begins

³⁰ Kant, *op. cit.*, pp. 112 (A78=B103), 141ff. (A116ff.), 151f. (B130). cf. Kemp Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 273ff. and 276f.

³¹ cf. Sorley, *A History of English Philosophy* (New York, 1921), pp. 199ff.

³² There are "certain principles . . . which the constitution of our nature leads us to believe, and of which we are under a necessity to take for granted in the common concerns of life, without being able to give a reason for them—these are what we call

with judgment because our minds are so constituted; it is quite another thing to show that the very consciousness of succession in time presupposes the reference to objects involved in judgment. Once Hume had questioned the right to claim objective reference for our ideas it became necessary to justify that claim.

Kant's method of accomplishing this turned out to be a vindication of Locke's original intuition of the objective character of sense perception. Hume had shown that an analysis of experience into units of passively received sense impressions is incompatible with any claim of objective reference for that experience. This, in itself, was a valuable contribution to the problem; it was also a just criticism of Locke, in so far as Locke had attempted to combine two conflicting analyses of experience. But the very incompatibility of these two conceptions of experience, the discovery of which was one of the most valuable results of Hume's work, was used by Kant against Hume's own constructive theory. For although Hume explicitly rejected the claim of objective reference for the elementary data of experience yet his admission that we are conscious of a succession of impressions was found by Kant to presuppose the objective reference Hume had denied. Nor was it possible for Hume to deny awareness of succession without eliminating the possibility of our distinguishing between different sense impressions; for without this those impressions themselves could never be recognized as separate simple units.

IV

Hume's conclusion was that a consistent empiricism leads inevitably to the destruction of the objectivity of knowledge. Kant attacked Hume's conclusion by showing that Hume's empiricism was not a consistent empiricism but presupposed an *a priori* element, unrecognized and unacknowledged by Hume. However, the objectivity of knowledge was reinstated by Kant at a sacrifice. The objects of knowledge have objectivity only in terms of a phenomenism which, according to Kant, completely excludes us from knowledge of the world of things-in-themselves. The question which concerns us now, in our attempt to understand Kant's work in its relation to Locke and Hume, is whether this distinction be-

the principles of common sense" (Johnston, *Selections from the Scottish Philosophy of Common Sense* [Chicago, 1915], p. 50).

tween phenomena and things-in-themselves is inherent in and necessitated by his central argument as it appears in the *Transcendental Deduction*, or whether it rests upon other considerations that do not enter into his central argument.

Kant was tremendously impressed with the apparent success of the mathematical and physical sciences in their attempts to provide knowledge of nature. Trained in the rationalistic school of Leibniz and Wolff, he demanded complete certainty and necessity of anything which claimed to constitute knowledge.³³ Formulating his problem in terms of the possibility of synthetical *a priori* judgments, he was convinced that both geometry and physics provide us with a multitude of examples of such propositions.³⁴ Assuming it to be a fact that in geometry and physics we are able to formulate *a priori* synthetic propositions, Kant asked what it is in the conditions of knowledge and experience that makes this possible. He was thus forced from the beginning to come to a conclusion that would account for what he considered the basic character of these sciences if he was to regard his inquiry as fully successful.

Kant's attempt to provide a final guarantee of the validity of Euclidean geometry and Newtonian physics led him to construct an *a priori* scheme composed of fixed and static forms. Only if his argument is successful in establishing the validity of just those specific forms can he be said to have accomplished his full purpose. However, it does not follow that a failure to realize this aim fully brands his laborious and ingenious work as a failure. In what follows I shall try to show that Kant was able to validate the physical and mathematical sciences only by assuming what he set out to prove. On the positive side I shall show that these assumptions do not touch the main argument of the *Transcendental Deduction*, and that the conclusions established by that argument stand.

There has been considerable controversy among Kant's commentators as to whether his argument, especially in the *Transcendental Aesthetic* and in the *Deduction of the Categories*, proceeds in accordance with the analytic and regressive method or according to the synthetic and progressive method.³⁵ This problem of in-

³³ Kant, *op. cit.*, pp. 11 (A xv) and 43f. (B 3f.). cf. Kemp Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. xxx and 601ff.

³⁴ Kant, *op. cit.*, pp. 46f. (A 4 = B 8), 55f. (B 20), 79f. (A 38f.).

³⁵ See Kemp Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 44f.

terpretation is of primary importance, for upon it depends the evaluation of Kant's argument as a whole, since in so far as the argument is merely analytic or regressive it begs the question. Without reviewing this controversy I shall suggest a solution which has at least the merit of appearing to reconcile the two divergent views. Briefly stated, my thesis is simply that in the fundamental argument of the *Transcendental Deduction*, and in some phases of the argument of the *Transcendental Aesthetic*, Kant used the synthetic method of proof; but in the interpretation he made of the conclusions thus arrived at he lapsed into the use of the analytic method.

In the *Metaphysical Exposition of Space* Kant's proof that space is *a priori* is constructed in accordance with the synthetic method. The merits of this argument I shall not discuss, as this does not bear directly upon our question. In the *Transcendental Exposition of Space*, however, the proof is analytic; the validity of Euclidean geometry is assumed as a premise, and it is contended that since space must be *a priori* in order that the synthetic *a priori* knowledge contained in geometry shall be possible it follows that space is *a priori*.³⁶ This part of the argument, taken by itself, is obviously circular. If, as Professor Kemp Smith points out, it could be shown that this is a confirmation of the synthetic proof that space is *a priori*, a conclusion already arrived at, then the argument of the *Transcendental Exposition of Space*, although circular if taken by itself, would acquire validity in so far as it served to confirm the conclusion previously reached.³⁷

³⁶ Kant regards as a conclusive refutation of the view that space and time are relations of appearances the fact that those who take such view "are obliged to deny that *a priori* mathematical doctrines have any validity in respect of real things (for instance, in space), or at least to deny their apodeictic certainty. . . . They can neither account for the possibility of *a priori* mathematical knowledge, nor bring the propositions of experience into necessary agreement with it" (Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 81 [A40f. = B57f.]). "Were this representation of space a concept acquired *a posteriori*, and derived from outer experience in general, the first principles of mathematical determination would be nothing but perceptions. They would therefore all share in the contingent character of perception; that there should be only one straight line between two points would not be necessary, but only what experience always teaches. . . . We should therefore only be able to say that, so far as hitherto observed, no space has been found which has more than three dimensions" (*ibid.*, pp. 68f. [A24]). See Kemp Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 112 and 566.

³⁷ Kemp Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 48f.

It is difficult, however, to accept this as representing the true relation between the two arguments. If we ask what Kant means by space, what character space has, we find that Kant has very little to tell us about this in the *Metaphysical Exposition*. As a given *a priori* intuition the characteristics possessed by space are found only by analysis of our outer experience. The actual proof that space is *a priori*, as developed independently of Kant's assumption concerning geometry, rests upon the contention that space is a pure *a priori* intuition, that it is an infinite given magnitude, and that the representation of space as a whole must precede the representation of the parts of space.³⁸ Further than this, the specific characteristics of space are not determined. Thus, although we should grant that space has been shown to be an *a priori* form of intuition, yet it does not follow that the space which has been shown to be an *a priori* form of intuition is the kind of space which Euclidean geometry describes. What Kant does here is simply to assume that having shown space (as a non-empirical, infinite, given magnitude presupposed by any representation of a finite, spatial magnitude) to be *a priori* he has thereby shown Euclidean space to be *a priori*. This is a groundless assumption, so far as Kant's argument is concerned, for he has established no connection between space as a pure intuition and Euclidean space. The fact that space is *a priori*, assuming that this has been independently established, would establish the validity of Euclidean geometry if and only if it were also proved that such *a priori* form of intuition has the characteristics ascribed to space by Euclidean geometry. As Professor Kemp Smith himself says, "That a straight line is the shortest distance between two points, cannot be proved by any mere appeal to intuition. The judgment will hold if it can be assumed that space is Euclidean in character; and to justify that assumption it must be shown that Euclidean concepts are adequate to the interpretation of our intuitional data. Should space possess a curvature, the above proposition might cease to be universally valid. Space is not a simple, unanalysable datum. Though intuitionally apprehended, it demands for its precise determination the whole body of geometrical science."³⁹ To this it might be added that nowhere in Kant's in-

³⁸ Kant, *op. cit.*, pp. 68ff. (A23ff.=B38ff.).

³⁹ Kemp Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

dependent proof that space is an *a priori* intuition is space shown to have any character which would conflict with the possibility of its possession of curvature. And although it may be true that space "demands for its precise determination the whole body of geometrical science," it does not follow that Euclidean geometry is the only possible geometrical science. Our conclusion therefore is that although Kant's proof that space is *a priori* is one which follows the strict synthetic method, yet the further conclusion that this same space is Euclidean in character has not been proved.

When we turn to the argument of the *Transcendental Deduction* the situation is somewhat different, although there is just as little justification for Kant's belief that he has succeeded in guaranteeing the basic principles of physical science. It may be true that Newtonian physics does presuppose the principles that Kant establishes in the *Deduction of the Categories*. But Kant nowhere shows that Newtonian physics is the necessary consequence of the conclusions arrived at in the *Deduction*. The two arguments have this further very important difference, that although geometrical principles enter directly into the argument of the *Transcendental Aesthetic*, yet in the *Transcendental Deduction of the Categories* the principles of the physical sciences are not involved. Even in the *Analytic of Principles* where, according to Kant's scheme, we expect to find those principles developed as consequences of the *Deduction*, those that actually appear are not principles of physical science nor are they all open to proof by the method that Kant employs. It was Kant's belief that Newton had "determined in a quite final manner the principles, methods and limits of scientific investigation."⁴⁰ Without this confidence in a system of physics which had been already formulated, it is difficult to see how Kant could have concluded, on the basis merely of his own argument, that physics contains *a priori* synthetic knowledge.

The actual argument of the *Transcendental Deduction* is independent of Kant's assumptions concerning the validity of physical science. Taking as his premise simply the fact that we are conscious of succession in time,⁴¹ Kant argues that this presupposes

⁴⁰ Kemp Smith, *op. cit.*, p. lv.

⁴¹ Since all our representations must belong to inner sense, then "all our knowledge is thus finally subject to time, the formal condition of inner sense. In it they must all be ordered, connected, and brought into relation" (Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 131 [A99]). cf. *ibid.*, pp. 141 (A115f.) and 146 (A124f.).

a "transcendental unity of apperception" whose synthetic processes are the necessary conditions without which there would be no consciousness of objects, hence no consciousness of self, hence no consciousness of succession in time. Not until we come to the *Analytic of Principles* is the argument extended to the determination of the specific *a priori* principles in terms of which the processes of synthesis manifest themselves in our knowledge of objects.⁴²

When we examine the argument of the *Analytic of Principles*, especially that of the first two *Analogies*, we find that the principles to which the categories give rise are "just those principles that are demanded for the possibility of the positive sciences."⁴³ But there is no proof whatever that the positive sciences, as Kant knew them and in the form which he regarded as final, are the only versions of scientific knowledge that these principles make possible. There is the further difficulty that the proof of the *First Analogy* is extremely unsatisfactory.⁴⁴ Kant's restatement of the principle in the second edition, where he identifies it with the principle of the conservation of matter, shows how far he was willing to go in attempting an artificial and impossible connection between his own argument and what he considered to be the principles of physical science. With the real subject of the *First Analogy* the principle of the conservation of matter has no connection.⁴⁵

Although a similar criticism cannot be made of the argument of the *Second Analogy*, yet the most favorable judgment as to the validity of the argument does not justify us in concluding that Kant has succeeded in establishing any specific system of natural science. The principle of cause and effect is not a scientific principle; it is presupposed by science. Before Kant can be justified in

⁴² "The *Analytic of Concepts* supplies no proof of the validity of particular categories, but only a quite general demonstration that forms of unity, such as are involved in all judgment, are demanded for the possibility of apperception. The proofs of the indispensableness of specific categories are first given in the *Analytic of Principles*" (Kemp Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 343). cf. *ibid.*, p. 333.

⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 344.

⁴⁴ "We must, then, conclude that Kant offers no sufficient deduction or explanation of the category of substance and attribute, and as he does so nowhere else, we are driven to the further conclusion that he is unable to account for its use in experience, or at least to reconcile it in any adequate fashion with the principle of causality" (*ibid.*, p. 363).

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 361f.

believing that he has established any particular system of physics upon a secure foundation and that he has protected it against all possible objection it is necessary that he show that no other system of physical science is possible. Even Kant's so-called "pure or universal natural sciences," within which the principles of substance and of cause and effect might be included, "is really *immanent metaphysics*, and the propositions in regard to substance and causality ought therefore to be classed as metaphysical."⁴⁶

As pointed out above Kant's failure to guarantee the validity of geometry and physics does not affect the argument of the *Transcendental Deduction*. These assumptions, which are basic to the first *Critique* as a whole and which affect Kant's interpretation of the results of his central argument, are ignored throughout the *Transcendental Deduction*. That argument stands on its own foundation and is entirely independent of any assumptions Kant might have made concerning actual synthetic *a priori* knowledge.

If we consider Kant's central argument independently of those special assumptions which influenced his own interpretation of it, we find its conclusion to be that experience involves an *a priori* conceptual form that gives to it both unity and objective reference. Whatever the categories may be, they must satisfy this fundamental condition. Kant considered his own special list of categories final because that set of categories included those presupposed by the sciences of geometry and physics as they existed in his day. But the principles that Kant derived from the categories are, at best, presuppositions of scientific knowledge and as such are merely limiting conditions. The most that Kant has actually established by his argument has been to show that just to the extent that we do anticipate experience to that extent we are forced to assume the applicability to the objects of experience of the concepts in terms of which we formulate our anticipation, and we are also forced to assume that the objects of possible experience belong to the kind of order whose general structure is revealed by those concepts. That assumption may turn out to be false, in which case we should have to try different concepts; *in any case*, however, we should be limited to concepts that attribute some unified structure to objects. So we may deny Kant's assumption that we have a

⁴⁶ Kemp Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 66f. When Kant uses the term "metaphysics" in the first *Critique* it is almost always transcendent metaphysics to which he refers.

a priori synthetic knowledge of the character he claimed, and yet his argument still has something important to say. It shows that even a tentative *a priori* application of specific concepts or generalizations must satisfy the general conditions of unity and coherence. It thus shows us the metaphysical ground (in the sense of an immanent metaphysics) of our application of logical criteria to experience. It was because things-in-themselves could not satisfy this condition and at the same time justify Kant in setting up as final a single set of specific *a priori* forms that he was compelled to regard the object of experience as merely phenomenal. If we are willing to abandon any claim of certainty with respect to specific items of scientific knowledge the separation of the phenomenal and the real no longer will be necessary.

I V

TIME AND POSSIBILITY IN KANT

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spatial, so we can only perceive ourselves and our mental states in introspection as being in time, though there is no reason to think that we really are in time. This certainly seems to raise the special difficulty that unless we know ourselves as we are and not merely as we appear, we cannot know what our forms of intuition are, but only what they appear to be, whilst Kant's argument certainly assumes that we know *what* they are.”¹

I here interpret “what” to mean “of what nature.” Of course we recognize that our awareness is what it is in so far as content is concerned. But, for fruitful philosophical argument, it is necessary to know pretty clearly just what the *act* of intuition really is. And this we cannot know on the grounds of Kant's phenomenalism.

Of course, it may be argued that Kant's transcendental method does not require us to know more than appearances and to detect their mode of relation one to another. But such a method can succeed only in establishing a sort of subjectivist positivism, which in Kant's own writing is painfully embarrassed by the spectral presence of the thing-in-itself. Since this is presented as the real object to be known and somehow the source of our intuitions and experience, it involves us in propositions inconsistent with strict positivism. Furthermore, since the thing-in-itself is beyond time we are faced with the difficult problem of explaining how the timeless is projected into temporal experience.

Besides, if Kantian time is not the essential form of actual concretion but of appearance, then the temporal self, appearing as an enduring though changing node of activity, becomes a sort of epiphenomenon, the appearance of something else. This something else it is possible to describe only as the “noumenal conditions of the self,” about which we can know nothing, or at least no more than, say, Locke claimed to know of substance.²

¹ C. D. Broad, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, article “Time,” Vol. XII, p. 344. (Italics mine.)

² Consider also Mr. Prichard's comment upon the Kantian view of time to the effect that for Kant the temporality of our mental states *should* be called real. His argument runs as follows. When we speak of things-in-themselves we refer to objectivity that is extra-mental. Phenomena differ in that they are not extra-mental but partially dependent for their structure upon the mind before which they stand. This form of mentally conditioned existence includes time, because the mind is temporal. On the other hand the thing-in-itself, being non-temporal and extra-mental, cannot be known. This distinction depends upon the temporal nature of mind, which is, so to speak, the principle of division between phenomenon and thing-in-itself. Now, if we say that time

Now, to admit that we are really extra-temporal entities somehow manifest to ourselves as "streams of thought," is only to recognize the attractiveness of Bergson's doctrine of a direct perception of our own endurance, whereby we are not extra-temporal entities but enduring agents concentrated in present acts of decision. After all, decision is the mind in action. It is also clearly temporal, usually involving consideration of a possibility not at present realized but relevant to some desired future, enlightened by an experience of the past. To reduce this living presence of the mind to an appearance of an extra-temporal noumenon is to deprive philosophy of a *προῦ στῶ*, an experienced starting-point.

Consider the consequences of this and we must admit that Kantian thought is really no answer to Humean scepticism, but a terrifying expansion of the sceptic's territory, as indeed it seemed to Kant's contemporaries. Since our intellectual decisions, our judgments, are temporal acts and since time is a form of appearance, a barrier between what seems and what is, we must admit that we are never sure of the true status of our judgments. After all, they are only phenomenal appearances which we cannot survey in their complete setting. How much has our thought lost by appearance as temporal, what distortion of its validity has been introduced? The answer to this question, so fundamental to philosophy, lies beyond our reach in the noumenal, extra-temporal realm which does not as such appear to us. Thus we can really know little more than Hume himself was willing to grant concerning the relation of our mind to things and of things to one another. If such thoroughgoing scepticism can be fairly avoided, our philosophy will lead us to a more reasonable conclusion. That Kant himself was dissatisfied with explanation restricted to the purely phenomenal is clear when we consider with what care he tried to show that moral judgments, for him so significant, may penetrate the supra-phenomenal reality.

is itself an appearance, then we must admit that the division of the two realms is only an *apparent* distinction and the Kantian phenomenalism is left without any foundation.

"If we do not know things-in-themselves, because they are independent of the mind, we only know phenomena because they are dependent upon the mind. Hence Kant is only justified in denying that we know things-in-themselves if he concedes that we really know our own (temporal) states, and not merely appearances which they produce" (*Kant's Theory of Knowledge* [Oxford, 1909], p. 113).

Time should not be conceived as a barrier between what seems and what is. If we so consider it we condemn our own temporal thinking and reduce ourselves to an ineffectual silence. This difficulty is very similar to that indicated in Schulze's *Aenesidemus* where the author holds that Kant really makes little things-in-themselves of reason, understanding and sensibility, insisting that only appearances of these are manifest to us.

All these difficulties follow from the proposition that time and becoming are appearances. We must substitute another theory of time if we are to be consistent. Let us say, then, that in temporal becoming the permanent receives transitory embodiment. Becoming is the continual making of the concrete. It is not an *appearance* of some non-processional entity, if by *appearance* we mean, as is usual among philosophers, an incomplete and ultimately inadequate perspective. Becoming is, however, an *appearance* of possibility, if by *appearance* we mean an exhibition under specific conditions which may or may not be appreciated or understood by the observer; as when we speak of an actor's recent *appearance*.

It may well be that real process or time involves appearance of this second type, without being in any sense an inadequate appearance of the non-temporal. Once, at least, Kant approaches such doctrine, albeit unconsciously. He insists that in moral life man can recognize and act according to an imperative, which directs his duty as an intelligent being. The suggestion is made that this imperative and the mind which comprehends it are final, noumenal realities. Now, an imperative is clearly a possibility relevant to actuality but, as such, not embodied therein. Thus, in the case where Kant is most eager to present us with unquestionable realities, he describes a situation in which actuality and possibility are contrasted and the need of their practical reconciliation indicated. This clearly approaches the Platonic and contemporary interpretations where action and becoming are not appearances of concrete reality but the embodiment of possible being.

Where Kant is writing of moral activity, such Platonic doctrine glimmers through the obscurity of his thought. But in epistemology the doctrine of representative perception possesses his thinking. Then experience comes between the mind and its object. Thus the temporal world of our perceptions and decisions is only

an incomplete appearance. This is representative perception carried to its last extreme.

But Kant's doctrine is richer than such general criticism can indicate: we must turn to the structure of his theory. The upshot of our preliminary investigation is, however, clear. We must seek to correct the Kantian theory of time, to avoid the outcome of the *Aesthetic*, unless we wish to return to the scepticism of Hume.

If time is now merely an appearance, there must be a distinction between time as a subjective feature of experience and time as an awareness of the temporal character of the object. There must be a distinction between time as feeling of change and the temporal change referred to by the feeling. As Alexander would say, time can be contemplated as well as enjoyed. With the feeling of change we are all, of course, acquainted as when we contrast the second hand of a watch with the hour hand. This "impression" brings us into cognitive contact with change but, being only a "first look," hardly reveals its essence. If time is not an appearance, subjective time involves, or at least must be capable of involving, awareness of a wider time. Such time must have more than just a "surface" which can be felt intuitively. It must have structure that can be grasped analytically.

We shall maintain that there are two such structures that can be grasped in the experience of time. One of them, the time of Kant's *Aesthetic*, does not belong in its own right to the world but to one way of considering the world. The other, the time which Kant rather dimly perceives in the *Analytic*, belongs properly in the world as well as in our minds, thus saving us from the predicament of a purely subjective time.

II

TIME AND POSSIBILITY IN THE *Aesthetic* AND *Analytic*

In his *Creative Evolution*, Bergson has written of Kant's theory of the perception of time as follows: "No doubt, knowledge is presented to us in it [*Critique of Pure Reason*] as an ever-open roll, experience as a push of facts that is for ever going on. But, according to Kant, these facts are spread out on one plane as fast as they arise; they are external to each other and external to the mind. Of a knowledge from within, that could grasp them in their springing

forth instead of taking them already sprung, that would dig beneath space and spatialized time, there is never any question."³

Now, it is true that in the *Aesthetic* events are thought of as given, ready-made, temporal entities. In the *Analytic*, however, it is clear that our perception of events is not a matter of sheerly inactive acceptance. The data have to be synthesized before we can recognize continuous events through them. The interpretation of data as storied events is not purely passive awareness. But even in the *Analytic*, Kant does not free himself completely from the "ready-made" conception of change. He does not know that we may really see events springing forth into concrete existence. This is because in his doctrine of the three syntheses Kant overlooks the importance of such elements as expectancy and purpose, in short, the non-contemplative awareness of possibility. The union of the three syntheses and this latter activity is not, to be sure, Bergsonian intuition. It is teleological and employs concepts. But for all that it penetrates the production of events.

It has been occasionally remarked that the time of the *Aesthetic* and the time of the *Analytic* are two distinct entities. In the *Aesthetic* time is described as entering experience as the form of intuition: it is given all of a piece as a dimensional background against which the material of experience is ordered. On the other hand, in the *Analytic* temporal order is recognized as significant owing to the three syntheses, which seem to be the acts upon which awareness is based. As a matter of fact these views are both important. Each contains an aspect of time experience. We do not maintain that Kant distinguished the two aspects clearly. In fact, he seems to have been unaware that his *Aesthetic* and *Analytic* are at odds. Furthermore, as we shall see, he failed to complete his doctrine of the syntheses. None the less, very briefly stated, the true distinction between the time of the *Aesthetic* and the time of the corrected *Analytic* is this: The time of the *Aesthetic* is the time of the past and of the determined future, or better the time of history and of prediction. It is chronological. The time of the corrected *Analytic* is the time of the living present. It is the time of real change. In the *Aesthetic*, time appears as a dimensional background from which the mind cannot successfully abstract if it

³ Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, tr. by Arthur Mitchell (New York, 1911), p. 361.

would consider concrete phenomena. This is the framework against which history and prediction are spread before us. Such time is purely dimensional: Bergson would call it spatial. The time of the *Analytic* is, when properly interpreted and corrected, not only dimensional but modal.⁴ Such time cuts across the categories of modality, rendering what once was a group of mere possibilities into a massive and coherent actuality or reducing possibility to practical non-entity by barring it from embodiment.

Kant's epoch-making doctrine of the transcendental unity of apperception is written with exclusive reference to contemplative experience. The theater of the syntheses is not consciousness considered as an agent, practical or aesthetic. Now, consciousness is always to some degree an agent. Thus while purely contemplative consciousness, in itself an abstraction, may be said to hold a past and a present in synthesis and to watch new events enter, active consciousness supplements this by looking toward the future. Such prevision may take the form of planning or of more or less interested or anxious expectation. It is quite essential to agency. "I am the same I that I was" is the formula of contemplative consciousness. Active consciousness must add "and that I shall be." Such awareness of identity is a transcendental condition of conscious agency which anticipates a future. But Kant's account of the syntheses is not broad enough to include cases of purposive activity, as, for instance, of literary composition, where there is always a sense of direction, a challenge to the future which completes our active consciousness.

This element is vital to the awareness of modal time. Consciousness always involves a conative aspect or moment, and all awareness, even that including dimensional time as an object, achieves modal time in so far as it is an activity, even though that time is not clearly recognized. This activity deserves the central position in theory of knowledge, the position that Kant gave to contemplation.

Thus a fourth synthesis is required: apprehension in intuition, retention in imagination, recognition in conception, and *anticipation in tentative judgment*. Anticipation may involve hardly more than a judgment as to what the future is to be like. Then it is

⁴ See C. Hartshorne, "Contingency and the New Era in Metaphysics," *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. XXIX (1932), nos. 16 and 17.

hardly to be distinguished from contemplation, although even here some element of evaluation with reference to possible action is included. Anticipation may however involve apprehension of a plan or an ideal whose realization we may achieve in the future. This second type of anticipation which is essential to all conation, practical, aesthetic or intellectual, quite alters our view of time since its future is not a matter of chronological distance but a theater open to an as yet unembodied possibility. The fourth synthesis completes an act of apprehension and directs our attention for ensuing acts. It sees the apprehended event not simply as the continuation of a series, fully concrete in detail, but as a point of departure beyond which are scattered various alternatives. The fourth synthesis is the prelude to practical decision and volition. It relates my present situation to the possible future which interests me, just as the third synthesis recognizes my present situation as "belonging with" my past. Thus, in hearing a clock strike, I must exercise the syntheses whereby I apprehend and retain the sounds, then recognizing them as belonging together in a series. But if my consciousness is to possess agency, I must recognize this series as relevant to the possible actions which I have been considering. Thus awareness that it is now, say, four o'clock may present me with a complex practical problem in arranging my further plans. The fourth synthesis draws unembodied possibilities together, just as the first three recognize embodied forms or actualities.

In scientific enquiry, the modern western mind has learned to take a disinterested attitude and to ignore or treat as subjective appearance the relevance of unembodied possibility. There always is such relevant possibility when intelligent decision is involved, even if the decision is only that of the scientist himself who controls his experiment. Thus the purely contemplative attitude is not, so to speak, an exhaustive one, it being only a narrow but emphasized phase of our whole state of mind.

The structure of dimensional time should be exhibited with emphasis upon sheer succession, from which the mind cannot escape when it considers concrete phenomena. Whereas spaces may be said to be coexistent but not successive, distinct divisions of time are successive but not coexistent. They are elements in a polyadic, transitive, asymmetrical relation. But modal time in-

cludes more than succession, as its structure involves the contrast between non-actual possibility and fully embodied actuality. It is thus to be distinguished from the *quantum continuum* of dimensional time, whose essence is exhausted by relations of *preceded by* and *succeeded by*, considered as applying to the concrete world.

If modal time is to be considered as fully objective—and we hope to show that there is good reason so to consider it—natural process may be described as a drawing together of possibilities into a concrete community. Literary and verbal composition are examples of such process. Here logical propositions are drawn together with units of syntax and of vocabulary to yield new sentences which carry a continuity of meaning. Here in this fusion we may well catch a glimpse of *natura naturans*, the productive power of mind and of nature.

In this matter, our line of argument will be as follows. Purposive activity, planning, composition, all involve recognition of unembodied, non-actual possibility or structure. The question arises: Have we the right to deny the validity of this type of awareness? This right can be shown only by reducing real possibility to a mere function of our own ignorance, and this involves the assertion of a natural determinism. This, as we shall learn, Kant does not demonstrate. If we do accept the genuine subsistence of possible structure, time appears as modal. Real modal time, being a link between the intelligible realm and the actual, concrete world, may then be seen to play objectively the part which Kant allows the faculty of judgment to play subjectively. This part is necessary to complete Kant's system and to give a place to teleology and freedom, both of which concepts require real possibility in the form of final cause.

For the present the fact remains that natural process often does not appear as modal. This is because the time of the *Aesthetic*, being an incomplete phase of the full *a priori* which does not, being incomplete, include reference to real possibility, frequently stands between us and the nature of things. This is particularly true in reflective thinking. We cannot emphasize too heavily the fact that Kant describes awareness of time as purely contemplative. He omits all elements of agency.

Kant is right in maintaining that the time of the *Aesthetic* belongs to experience and not to things-in-themselves. Such time is

a scheme for reproduction of what has passed or of contemplative expectation of what is not yet. The actual entities referred to enjoy in their own present time, i.e. when they exist, a life of modal change. This change cannot be apprehended as dimensional time: hence Bergson's polemic against the latter concept. The history of an event is usually written with free use of that event's future, with reference to which selection of significant elements is made. The historian never loses sight of relations best to be expressed by the phrase "this was to become—", which reveal the presence of dimensional time. In this time the future is actual, ready-made along with the past, and unembodied possibility as such is lost sight of.

The relevance of unembodied possibility seems rarely to impress itself upon the mind of one who surveys a chronological scheme such as the time of the *Aesthetic* affords. The continuity of Kant's "line that proceeds to infinity," with which he represents the time of the *Aesthetic*, seems to leave no opening into which unembodied possibility may break. But when unembodied possibility is actively relevant to a situation, its time cannot be represented as a mere line.

The structures of possibility are genuine objects even though they are not concrete and are not presented in the full sensuous detail proper to phenomena but are seen as lying behind or beyond various sensuous embodiments, these embodiments sometimes being no more than sketches on a blackboard. Now, these possibilities may be spatial or temporal in their own structure, but they are not included or located in any space or time which embraces concrete phenomena. Thus in our experience of modal time, when we consider possibility as relevant to a concrete situation, we may be said to reach beyond time. Thus even in our awareness of phenomena, we are not confined to the temporal order as sharply as the reader of the *Aesthetic* may be brought to suppose.

In this connection it is pertinent to consider Kant's treatment of the category of possibility. It is too narrow to allow any theory of modal time. Kant defines possibility as follows: "That which agrees, in intuition and in concepts, with the formal conditions of experience, is *possible*." Such a definition of possibility seems broad enough, but Kant severely limits it in the sequel. "The first postulate demands that the conception of things should agree with the

formal conditions of any experience whatever. Now this objective form of experience includes all synthesis that is essential to the knowledge of objects. A conception may imply synthesis, but if the synthesis does not belong to experience, either as being derived from it, or as forming its *a priori* condition, the conception must be held as empty and as not related to any object. . . .⁵

It is true that possibility, to be relevant to our world or "cosmic epoch" must satisfy certain minimal conditions which can be described as *a priori*. But it is questionable whether possibility must be derived from experience. We should prefer to say that invention, our bringing "new" phenomena into the range of our experience, depends upon a previous flight of thought touching upon hitherto unguessed hypotheses, possibilities, or coherent structures which happen to be relevant to our world.

It is clear that such thinking cannot be wholly derived from recognized actuality. We think of possibility first, we experience its embodiment later. But according to the Kantian view, where possibility is derived from sensuously funded experience, possibility must depend upon actuality and be wholly derived from it. This becomes very clear in the section on the *Postulates of Empirical Thought in general* where Kant writes that the empire of possibility cannot, in so far as we can understand it, be wider than reality. "But this [alleged] process of adding to the possible I refuse to allow. For that which would have to be added to the possible, over and above the possible, would be impossible."⁶ The proof of this depends upon the postulate that possibility must be derived from perception and its formal conditions. But after all, impossibility of this sort is a species of possibility that cannot for the moment make contact with the actual. Absolute impossibility is incoherence or real contradiction, which is quite another matter.

Indeed, all intellectual discourse or science transcends actuality in that it brings us to recognize "ideal" patterns never embodied precisely as they are recognized. The forms of geometry, say, and the chemical elements enjoy no rigidity or purity in their actual

⁵ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. by Norman Kemp Smith (London, 1929), *First Postulate of Empirical Thought*, p. 239 (A218=B265). All quotations from Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* are from Kemp Smith's translation.

⁶ *ibid.*, p. 251 (A231=B284).

embodiment. Triangularity—the “any triangle *ABC*” of the geometry text—cannot be imagined or sensuously perceived, although it can be defined. Hence its presence, as distinct from its embodiment, in the concrete world could never be verified even if it were somehow perfectly actualized. Again, the fact that universal propositions are so happily written as hypothetical indicates that science is itself a penetration of possibility, relevant to a region of actuality, rather than a direct grasp of actuality as such. To be sure, when these ideal structures are surveyed by the mind, they will be seen, if motion is in any way involved in their essence, against a background of dimensional time. Hence we may very easily overlook the thesis that universals are abrupt possibilities.

Kant seems to believe that there must be a one-to-one correspondence between the features of an actual entity and the possibility corresponding to it. “Through the actuality of a thing I certainly posit more than the possibility of it, but *not in the thing*. For it can never contain more in its actuality than is contained in its complete possibility.”⁷ This is false. A possibility is always a structure, a universal: it can be embodied in more ways than one, and each embodiment will have concrete peculiarities surpassing the universal pattern itself. “Complete possibility” in Kant’s sense is not possibility at all but individuality concretely actualized.

When Kant writes in the *Aesthetic* that “time is not something which exists of itself, or which inheres in things as an objective determination,”⁸ he is right. The time of the *Aesthetic*, which ignores unembodied possibility, is neither of these. Nor, on the other hand, can we call such time the “form of the internal sense,” if by this term we mean our sense of our own enduring. As long as we are sufficiently conscious to maintain the syntheses we hold ourselves above the time of the *Aesthetic* and enjoy modal time.

The space and time of the *Aesthetic* comprise the way in which consciousness orients itself in the universe as a whole, not the way in which consciousness maintains a living present of selective decision. The *unities* of space and of time, the frames of the environment, however remote, are important aspects of the argument in the *Aesthetic*. These comprise the mind’s crude apprehension of its

⁷ Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 252 (A234=B287 note).

⁸ *ibid.*, p. 76 (A32=B49).

own status against a permanent background. Thus the space and time of the *Aesthetic* are recognitions of our finitude,⁹ not unlike the contemporary German phenomenologist's concept of *in der Welt sein*.

But purely dimensional time contains no real change. Real change is observed by the aid of the four syntheses. We recognize that this real change was in the past and will be in the future; but in imagination we never project real change into purely dimensional time. In dimensional time "all that makes the *tempo* of one succession so recognizably different from that of another has been eliminated, exactly as, to use an arresting phrase of Dr. Whitehead, the 'shapiness of shapes' is eliminated from pure geometry."¹⁰ Thus understood, "time is real as a condition of the experience of sensitive subjects, but it is not a form which profoundly exhibits the unity of things."¹¹ On the other hand modal time comes more and more to appear as the very unifying power which produces thinghood or the actual, concrete togetherness of possibilities.

Dimensional time then is itself not concrete and, in so far as history is made to fit easily into such a scheme, history is remote from concretion. After all, history and sociological prediction do not display the full concrete nature of their objects but rather indicate certain patterns or structures, say, of economic or political organization, which, it is said, were or will be pertinent to those objects. History does not involve our participation in the modal time of the past. Nor will this time ever be envisaged: it no longer exists. In this statement we have before us the real significance of the past. This concrete past has been absorbed into the present in the sense that the present is what it is owing partially to the fact that it has continued certain elements of the structure of the past. These structures may be studied with reference to the past. But

⁹ cf. Santayana's *The Realm of Matter* (New York, 1930), p. 24: "The most a man can say for himself, or for any other element from which exploration may start, is that whatever is to enter his field of action must belong to the same dynamic system with himself. In experience and art, as in the nebular hypothesis, this dynamic oneness of the world is primitive. It is not put together by conjoining elements existing separately, but is the *locus in which they are found*; for if they were not found there, they would be essences only and not facts." (Italics mine.) Santayana recognizes here the spatio-temporal unity of the actual environment, but unhappily he includes an actual future in this environment. And hence he leaves no place for real modal time.

¹⁰ A. E. Taylor, *The Faith of a Moralist* (London, 1930), Vol. II, p. 337.

¹¹ *ibid.* Quoted by Taylor from Bosanquet.

the act whereby the structures were brought into coherent, concrete unity with the full texture of the past is gone finally and utterly. Nevertheless, in admitting that the past perishes, we do not accept Descartes' suggestion that the universe is continually being destroyed and recreated. The concrete moments that perish do not exhaust the universe which contains a fund of possibility that, although reoriented for concretion by each moment of change, is not destroyed thereby.

The past moment of modal time does not exist for the present, but it enjoys a very peculiar form of *subsistence* that is open to present knowledge. There is immanence of the modal past more or less clearly recognized in present thought, as we have just seen. And we know that the past was once a present without a concrete future to bound it, although we do not fully recapture such existence, although we do not *see* past history as unfinished.

Examples are always dangerous in metaphysics but perhaps the following instance will enlighten our contrast of dimensional and modal time. Consider the experience of seeing a mediocre motion picture for the second or third time. The outcome of every moment is recalled and the present becomes a moving point rather than an act of realization. There is no real modal present and the picture reveals no life or consciousness but only motion. It becomes a sadly truncated imitation of genuine human activity, a mere before and after.

When we thus clearly recognize the abstract nature of the time of the *Aesthetic*, it is clear that such time will naturally appear as without bounds. Such time is really only a framework held up by the mind for the sake of giving a background for reference, i.e. it is *a priori*. Hence no information drawn from historical material can bring our elementary intuition to limit the framework of the background or to think of there being more than one background. The same is true of space which must appear to elementary intuition as one and unbounded.

But the space and time of the *Aesthetic* do not or should not by themselves generate a geometry. There seems to be nothing in the *a priori* intuitions upon which to found a theory of the structure of space-time, i.e. to determine the relation of space to time or the curvature of space in the real world of moving bodies. These facts

are not *a priori* matters, as the presence of the crude space-time framework seems to be. They are as empirical as the inverse square of the distance law or the fact of sexual reproduction.

However, the most abstruse science of space and of motion inherits something from its infra-intellectual origin. Scientists tend to consider their subject matter as actual, existing beyond the reach of possibility. Thus it is very rare that we find on the part of the natural scientist any recognition of modal time. This attitude of the scientist is clearly evident in the writings of Hinton and of Dunne. History is thought to be a manifold of "events" along which the mind moves. Thus this motion of the mind is the only real motion in the universe. The future is then a sea of actuality waiting to be known. We need not evaluate this theory here but only indicate that it is clearly incompatible with our belief that action or composition involves awareness of an unembodied possibility. This belief we shall defend in greater detail in the next section.

Aside from its abstract nature, however, dimensional time as we interpret it seems to fulfill quite adequately the conditions which Kant outlines in the *Aesthetic*. It is not, being a framework for interpretation, derived from experience as an empirical concept is derived. It is one, unbounded, and necessary for observation involving any sort of chronology. Furthermore the mind cannot wholly free itself of dimensional time. In modal time, our present moment, in so far as it contains an actual before and an after, has dimensionality within itself, even though it springs from possibility and involves relevant possibility as yet unembodied. Further, in so far as agency involves an awareness of the past, modal time may be said to appear against a background of dimensional time. Again, the unembodied possibilities contemplated as relevant to the *future* will appear as crude sketches in which dimensional before and after may be recognized.

But the time of the *Aesthetic* is unhappily named: it is not the pure form of sensibility, but of contemplative or disinterested and non-purposive awareness. By itself the theory of dimensional time will not describe normal sensuous awareness which is never purely contemplative.

III

TIME AND DETERMINISM

The time of the *Analytic* is not purely dimensional. It is not given through intuition all of a piece but is maintained in awareness by a complicated activity. Consider the three syntheses of apprehension, retention and recognition. The first whereby a temporal manifold appears to the mind offers us no more than the time of the *Aesthetic*, from which the mind never wholly abstracts since the elements in any moment of attention may be ordered according to dimensional time. The second and third syntheses give the time of perception a storied content: they make possible the apprehension of events or temporal continuation recognized as objective. Here then the sensuous manifold is synthesized into significance.

This is done by recognition of certain pervasive phenomenal objects, not perceived through the sense organs. These objects are the categories, which, like substance and attribute, cause and effect, supply the warp and woof for the interpretation of phenomena perceived by the senses. This organization makes possible recognition of the genuine unity of the objective scene.

The synthesis of apprehension in intuition is discussed by Kant as the first of the syntheses. Kant seems at times to believe that we apprehend apparently unrelated or raw materials, spread out against dimensional time, and then in later synthesis relate these elements according to patterns of continuity. From the alternative point of view which we have been presenting, it is obvious that the mind may proceed in reverse order, beginning with unrealized patterns or relations and then proceeding to a distinct image of the elements. This is the procedure necessary for composition or for any creative work. In such activity we are conscious of objective or modal time.¹²

It seems to be a good principle in metaphysics to accept spontaneous experience at its face value except when, so to speak, it cries out for correction by conflicting with other experience or with

¹² Professor Whitehead is very likely right when he tells us that consciousness and the explicitly recognized distinction between subject and object depends upon an awareness of alternatives or non-actual possibility. "I might be looking at something else," "This cloth is red *rather than orange*," etc., are implicit judgments which make consciousness, as the individual's awareness of his own distinct existence, possible.

well founded principles which it would be intellectual suicide to deny. In no other way can we avoid the pitfalls of a doctrinaire dogmatism. In no other way can we be sure that we are not ignoring genuine experience only to satisfy our allegiance to an established doctrine which possesses our thinking.

In what way, then, may it be said that apprehension of real possibility is outlawed by well founded philosophical theory? Only, it seems clear, by establishing that the phenomenal world lies in the grip of an exhaustive determinism which renders the apprehension of any possible alternative to a given situation an illusion, based upon incomplete grasp of data. Science itself does not make so sweeping an assertion of determinism. Philosophy of science in recent years has also hesitated to maintain such a doctrine. As Meyerson says, "To suppose the existence of free phenomena entirely detached from the domination of law and from our pre-
vision in no way assails the principle of science."¹³ The concrete world need not be conceived even by the scientist as being exhaustively reduced to a framework of natural law. Now Kant bases his phenomenal determinism upon the principle of causality which he considers involved in all perception as a category. According to this view, each event follows from a preceding one "according to a necessary rule." This doctrine is really very close to the truth but the argument does not justify the assertion of a hard and fast determinism.¹⁴

Kant's analysis of experience indicates clearly enough that without our recognition of a minimum of orderly structure running through past and present and opening upon the future, the experience of time and the continuity of self-consciousness would be impossible. The present would not "belong to" the past as it must in egocentric, temporal experience. Thus we are justified in asserting that there must be patterns of interrelation binding past and present together in any flux of objects open to sensuous apprehension. Thus the present may be seen to "belong to" the past. But we find nothing in the Kantian analysis which shows us that every concrete feature of the present must be bound to some feature of the past "according to a necessary rule." All that the argument requires is that any present scene must contain or embody phases

¹³ Meyerson, *Identity and Reality*, tr. by J. Loewenberg (New York, 1930), p. 26.

¹⁴ See the author's *Studies in the Philosophy of Creation* (Princeton, 1934), pp. 153f.

or aspects, certain "universals," that, so to speak, fuse with the past. This does not involve us in the acceptance of an exhaustive determinism. The aspects which fuse with the past need not exhaust the concrete surface of the present. Thus we may still argue, despite all the causal connections necessary to support experience, that when two events occur in a series of phenomena open to the mind the full relation between the events need not be determined until the actual emergence of the later event in the concrete world.

Professor Whitehead has expressed this by saying that every occasion (minimal concrete event) transcends the universe which itprehends, in other words maintains an individuality in the face of a world which it nevertheless needs as its background. The occasion must also, it would seem, escape its future as it transcends its past environment: never is an event wholly preserved in its sequel. There can be no completely successful *recherche du temps perdu*.

IV

TIME AND THE *Schematism*

Kant is very close to the theory of modal time in his doctrine of schematism as again in the *Critique of Judgment*. Schematism is an art "concealed in the depths of the human soul,"¹⁵ an art which reconciles concepts with sensuous perception in time. This art applies to the temporal flux of imagination the rules for synthesis of sensuous elements with respect to conceptual forms. This being the case, it is obvious that the work of the three syntheses cannot be complete without schematism. This reconciliation of conceptual pattern with sensuous flux may seem to many of us today to be the very mainspring of experience. Kant knew this, too, for he wrote that could we penetrate to the faculties involved in such operation we should lay bare the depths of the human soul, "whose real modes of activity nature is hardly likely ever to allow us to discover."¹⁶

Kant recognized that beneath the understanding and sensibility there must lie a type of mental activity which can hold the two in significant relation one to another. In the *Introduction* he writes ". . . there are two stems of human knowledge, namely, *sen-*

¹⁵ Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 183 (A141=B180).

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 183 (A141=B181).

sibility and *understanding*, which perhaps spring from a common, but to us unknown, root. Through the former, objects are given to us; through the latter, they are thought."¹⁷ Again in the *Analytic*: "The two extremes, namely sensibility and understanding, must stand in necessary connection with each other through the mediation of this transcendental function of imagination, because otherwise the former, though indeed yielding appearances, would supply no objects of empirical knowledge, and consequently no experience."¹⁸ This function of the imagination is the hidden art of the soul. From our point of view we may consider such words to be of the utmost significance, for it is surely true that had Kant refused to bow deferentially before this secret art of the soul but had attempted to penetrate its mysteries, he would never have left his theory of mental synthesis where he did.

Not only must the categories be schematized to maintain themselves in the temporal flux of experience; but according to Kant, there must be schemata for empirical concepts as well. Schematism is the art whereby concepts as possibilities of experience or expression are given local habitation and embodiment in sensuous imagination.

Concepts do not depend directly upon sensuous experience as the empiricists suppose. They require schemata for their origin and recognition. ". . . An object of experience or its image [is never] adequate to the empirical concept; for this latter always stands in immediate relation to the scheme of imagination, as a rule for the determination of our intuition, in accordance with some specific universal concept. The concept 'dog' signifies a rule according to which my imagination can delineate the figure of a four-footed animal in a general manner, without limitation to any single determinate figure such as experience, or any possible image that I can represent *in concrete*, actually presents."¹⁹ There is no one image which includes Spitz, Dachshund, and St. Bernard. This recalls an earlier foreshadowing of the same thought in the works of Hume.

"There are in the mind . . . a certain number of habits of thought, each of them representing whole sets of particular ideas

¹⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 61f. (A15=B29).

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 146 (A124).

¹⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 182f. (A141=B180).

that have unity with each other despite their obvious differences. These habits are 'acquired' in the course of experience. They depend upon the original impetus of the mind itself to assimilate everything to everything else and they depend, also, upon the actual repetition of the events in nature. The *usual* relations are those that really *determine* our thinking. They are the ones we denote in language. . . . When such customs of the mind exist we need only hear a general term to think of some particular idea suited to the context of our thought or conversation. The term touches off a very active disposition of the mind itself and this disposition then exhibits a remarkable power of discrimination, calling up to definite representation whatever is most relevant to the occasion. The custom is then something potential, fraught with activity, prompt to suggest ideas!"²⁰

This may be stated with greater emphasis on objective reference as follows: Concepts refer to possibilities, as unactualized. But no concept can enter sensuous experience or artistic production except as immanent in the flux of words or other medium which constitutes the tissue of the concrete. When actualized the concept is a coordination of the elements offered by the medium, as well as a principle of possibility which might be embodied elsewhere without reference to this particular nexus.

All thinking is a matter of embodiment of a relatively general meaning in some relatively particular medium.²¹ This is true of the simplest sort of perception, where a three dimensional, spatial pattern is embodied cognitively in a flux of many *sensa*, themselves clearly lacking in many of the characteristics which they come to embody. So we must recognize a selective decision at work in our most commonplace apprehension of the world. Even in perception we are aware of embodied possibilities or conceptual

²⁰ C. W. Hendel, *Studies in the Philosophy of David Hume* (Princeton, 1925), p. 128.

²¹ In this matter, we find ourselves in virtual agreement with M. Michel Souriau in his *Le jugement réfléchissant dans la philosophie critique de Kant* (Paris, 1926). M. Souriau indicates the importance of the judgment which maintains our apprehension of the affinity of phenomena and suggests that, if we are going to escape treating the categories as mere *a priori* forms happily enjoying a preestablished harmony with the detail of the actual world, we must recognize here in the *Analytic* a faculty of judgment which proceeds without rigid submission to ready-made concepts (pp. 44-5). This faculty, we interpret, must be that "art concealed in the depths of the human soul" that is able to recognize the stable, conceptual order embodied in unstable, actual becoming.

form. Accordingly the future is never the extension of a concrete present. The future appears as the answer to the question: "Which of these possibilities will hold sway in embodiment?"

At this point the philosophies of Plato, of Kant, and of modern temporalism intersect. Here we find the problems of the relation between Idea and becoming, concept and sense, possibility and the concrete pressing for solution. The solution in all these cases can be reached only after study of that art of which Kant speaks, which is hidden in the depth of the soul. This is, perhaps, the true *natura naturans*, the activity which maintains orderly structure persistent throughout a flux that comes to be and passes away continually.

Indeed, it may be wise boldly to define mind as the link between possibility and actuality, as the metaphysically amphibious agent of becoming. We have already seen that Kant unconsciously inclines toward this position in his theory of practical reason. This solution is also the final outcome of Platonism. Consider Plato's treatment of mind in the *Philebus* and of the demiurge in the *Timaeus*, where mind is interpreted as the power which holds the Ideas and the flux in contact. This is the principle of creative idealism toward which our study of time seems to point. We cannot here undertake to consider the many problems involved in defense of this doctrine as an ontological first principle. We must content ourselves with this parenthetical comment.

Kant's theory of time never clears itself of the inadequacies of the *Aesthetic*. This is to be noted in the following passage of the section on schematism. "The schema of substance is the permanence of the real in time, that is, the representation of the real as a substrate of empirical determination of time in general, and so as abiding while all else changes. (The existence of what is transitory passes away in time but not time itself. To time, itself non-transitory and abiding, there corresponds in the [field of] appearance what is non-transitory in its existence, that is, substance. Only in [relation to] substance can the succession and coexistence of appearances be determined in time.)"²² The enduring substantial permanence, reflected in the scientific theories of the conservation of motion and of energy, is the phenomenal correlate of time.

²² Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 184 (A143=B183). (Italics mine.)

Taken by itself, the time so described is that of the *Aesthetic*: it is the time which knows no real possibility, the infinite line, at any point of which substance is preserved intact.

Now, there is another permanence besides that of substance which is equally important. This is the very nature of modal time itself. It might be called the enduring relation between the completed past and the open future. It is, in other words, the pattern of the decisive present, which pattern is always involved in the linking of actuality and possibility. This most general pattern of the present does not change, although new material passes through it.

This pattern, that of a decisive present, is an eternal characteristic of the world. It is embodied in every act of awareness and in the passage of any possibility that is expanded into actuality. This pattern is, perhaps, the most adequate symbol of eternity. It is important to recognize that eternity so conceived is not a concrete organization of all evolution and history but the stable form of an everlasting flux.

V

THE ANTINOMY OF TIME

Kant had two reasons, aside from the explicit argument in the *Aesthetic*, for doubting the full objectivity of time. In the first place time was in his mind inseparable from determinism and Kant's moral interest inclined him to look with distaste upon the latter doctrine. Again, the temporal world seemed to involve itself in a logical antinomy: its credentials seemed to indicate that it must be considered as paradoxically with and without a beginning. This apparent contradiction strengthened Kant in his belief that time is purely phenomenal. From the point of view which we have been presenting, from which time is seen as real, neither of these considerations seems to carry weight. We have already seen how one can undermine Kant's phenomenal determinism. Consider now the problems raised by what we might call the antinomy of time.

Let us examine primarily not the formal statement of the first conflict listed under the first antinomy but the more subtle statement of the problem involved in the sections that follow. In Section 7 of the *Dialectic, Critical Solution of the Cosmological Problem*,

Kant brings to light the issues really involved in the dispute: Has the world a beginning in time?

The argument of the first antinomy has run as follows: To suppose that the world has had a beginning in time is to suppose that there has been a time before the world existed. But in such empty time nothing can take place, hence no world system could have been initiated therein. Hence the world is without a beginning in time. On the other hand, if the world has no beginning in time, an eternity may be said to have elapsed at every moment. This Kant holds to be contradictory. It is now recognized that the latter argument is invalid.²³ However, there is a real problem involved, which appears in Section 7:

In what sense can we say: If the conditioned is given, the whole series of conditions is given?

If the event *a* is given, then must there be recognized as real a past chain of cause and effect reaching out without limit as the condition of *a*? This conception baffles the mind which is bewildered when asked to comprehend an actual infinity of concrete events. All determination is negation and an object without limits is no genuine object. This often inclines philosophers to accept a noumenal world beyond time.

Kant's comment is profound, and happily it may be translated into our restatement of his theory of time. When referring to things-in-themselves, the proposition "If the conditioned is given, the entire series of all its conditions is likewise given"²⁴ is just the assumption that every conclusion must have complete premises. This is really Leibniz' law of sufficient reason. The proposition does not in other words indicate the actual existence of an indefinite past conditioning the present. If we consider the disputed proposition as referring to appearances, we must recognize the idea of succession. Here, therefore, we cannot presuppose the absolute totality of the synthesis and of the series presented in it. However, if the proposition refers to things-in-themselves all the members of the series are given irrespective of any condition in time, condition and conditioned are given together.

²³ Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'* (rev. ed., London, 1923), pp. 483, 484.

²⁴ Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 443 (A497 = B525).

Kant probably thought of this in terms of an eternity of the supra-temporal type. But it is now clear that we need not do this. If we wish to consider process as ultimately real, we may argue that the conditions are not included as ordered serially in a given event, but that they are embodied in the internal constitution of that event, as elements of that constitution. An event transcends its past in the sense that it completes the past rather than obeys it, still the event must fit itself upon certain existing conditions and its conformance to these conditions gives an immortality to them even as they pass. If the past had been otherwise than it was, the present would not be just what it is. Still the past, as such, does not exist. But it is preserved in the constitution of the present event which has bowed to it and accepted its conditions.

It is the task of consciousness in its historical phase to express these present conditions in terms of a scheme of dimensional time which presents them as the end-terms in a series of events. In the time of the *Aesthetic* an indefinite series of past history appears: the time of the *Aesthetic* is phenomenal time. To real or modal time no such unlimited series pertains.

Thus the realm of dimensional time enjoys a limited objectivity. It is one order, although only one, of possible experience and it displays the "x" of history, which is to be determined by investigation. Things-in-themselves are the active "presents" or "nows" of modal time. It is upon this present which has conformed to the past that history is built and it must look to the present for its verification. The real past in its full modal life can be thought about but not exhaustively apprehended.

The thing-in-itself is not in an absolute time of the Newtonian sort. One moment does not include a cross-section of the universe. Each present or act of modal decision, has its own chronological perspective and establishes a pseudo-absolute time of its own. The dimensional intuition of time as described in the *Aesthetic* is Newtonian time, but it may be correctly reinterpreted as the subjective form of one chronological perspective. We have learned from the relativity-mathematicians that the time-order of events in one perspective need not be the same as that in another and will not be, granted that the two observers do not share one point of origin.

VI

TIME AND TELEOLOGY

In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant banished teleology from the phenomenal world. In the *Critique of Judgment* he suggests that the noumenal world may well be teleological in organization. But this world is in no sense temporal. In fact it is just because the phenomenal world is in time that we cannot interpret it teleologically, but must admit a *vis a tergo* determinism.

Kant's view may be stated as follows. We perceive concrete objects as series of events. We see them in a temporally piecemeal fashion, now one stage and then another. We do not see a development as a whole, we do not make one continuous object out of a history. Rather we construct our idea of such a totality by treating it as the sum of its concrete parts. We even consider it as if it were determined by its concrete parts. We are not in a position to recognize the whole development, or its general structure, as a determining factor in the fashioning of its concrete elements. Could we free ourselves from temporal process, as a causal sequence of states, and see each state as determined by the plan of the whole rather than trying, as we do, to see it as the result of what has gone before, final causes would be fully significant and life appear as teleological. It would not, however, involve sequence; means and ends would be given *together*, and ends would appear as wholes or organisms of which the parts, or functioning organs, would appear as means.

But, we may query, is such failure to grasp teleological process the result of our *temporal*, and therefore *vis a tergo*, apprehension? Is it not rather that we are forced by our lack of information and insight to recognize dimensional rather than modal time? In dimensional time we see only sequences, we do not recognize alternatives and the presence of decision. What is worse, we soon come to feel that in our study of the world reference to any other than purely sequential time is inconceivable. It was natural for Kant, who believed that all apprehension of time-content must be subject to causal determinism, to identify all knowledge of a temporal origin with a mechanical interpretation of things.

We might illustrate our alternative position by comparing our unsuccessful attempts to understand a phrase of teleological de-

velopment with the inept efforts of the school-boy to master a passage of Virgil, read aloud, where he is withheld from grasping the continuity of meaning and the "direction" of the passage by his inability to hear the words as properly relevant to their non-adjacent modifiers. Even if the student accomplishes a translation, he misses the esthetic power, the choice or decisive determination which the words reveal, when they are recognized as the embodiment of a subtle theme. For such a reader the words are not decisions, they are little more than beads on a string.²⁵ The difference between such perfunctory piecing a passage together and really entering into its decisive activity illustrates the difference between mechanical and teleological interpretation, the one recognizing dimensional, the other modal time.

In fact, modal time amply fulfills the requirements of Kant's theory of teleology. In modal time wholes are given prior to parts, for wholes may exist as possibilities as yet unembodied and thus without concrete detail. As they receive embodiment they function as the final causes of concrescence. Wholes are prior to concrete elements as the theme of an essay is prior to the words in which it is embodied. In an early stage of composition the theme exists without the texture of full verbal embodiment.

Thus if real time is modal, there seems to be no difficulty in saying that an organism grows, functions, and behaves as it does for the sake of maintaining its own existence in the face of its environment, or that its behavior, growth, and functioning are embodiments, maintained in the fact of many shifting conditions, of a number of patterns or possibilities which comprise the life-form of the organism. This life-form requires a continual adjustment of one system of organs to another, if it is to be preserved. J. S. Haldane has shown us many instances of this type of adjustment or coordination within the organism and between the organism and its environment. These adjustments are somewhat analogous to the many decisions made by an artist as he executes the several changes in his work made necessary by the alteration of some central feature.

Speculation concerning the ultimate nature of things is always a matter of analogy and remains to the end tentative. Kant knew

²⁵ See the author's *Studies in the Philosophy of Creation* (Princeton, 1934), pp. 29-33.

this and insisted in his *Critique of Judgment* that he was doing no more than presenting to us the suggestion that the world is really organized according to a pattern which we cannot clearly grasp. We wish to suggest that for this pattern another more consistent as regards the status of time and change may be substituted. Had Kant in the *Analytic* penetrated a step beyond the three syntheses he would have been in a position to anticipate modern temporalism. He had only to include in his analysis of our awareness of time the subjective element of expectancy and the objective element of unembodied possibility.

The philosophy of modal time would have satisfied his desire to defend free-will and moral autonomy. Moral imperatives may be interpreted as possibilities of the highest intrinsic value which the intelligent human agent should therefore choose to embody. Against the background of the theory of modal time, there is no contradiction involved in such a moral theory as there must be if we deny the genuine reality of unembodied possibility in order to make peace with a determinism. Neither do we involve ourselves in the contradictions exhibited in the first section of this essay, contradictions which follow upon the denial of the reality of time. The theory of modal time avoids determinism and still saves the reality of time and of change. This outcome is a definite advance upon Kant's actual conclusions, since it makes feasible a reconciliation which Kant himself was anxious to accomplish, the reconciliation of moral teleology with scientific order, and does this without reducing time to an appearance.

V

KANT'S CONCEPT OF REALITY

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KANT'S CONCEPT OF REALITY

I

KANT'S explicit doctrine of reality begins to emerge in the section of the first *Critique* on the categories, where we find the term assigned to the first of the three pure concepts under the head of quality. Since these pure concepts of the understanding correspond to the logical forms of judgment, reality is the category for the affirmative form of the judgment. But unfortunately Kant omitted definitions of the categories, and assumed that the classification of judgments, with a few exceptions, was adequately treated in formal logic; so that we get no hint as to just how we should interpret the correspondence between reality and affirmation. But the following passage from the *Dialectic* gives us what he probably meant. "A transcendental negation . . . signifies not-being in itself, and is opposed to transcendental affirmation, which is a something the very concept of which in itself expresses a being. Transcendental affirmation is therefore entitled reality [*Realität (Sachheit)*], because through it alone, and so far only as it reaches, are objects something [things], whereas its opposite, negation, signifies a mere want, and, so far as it alone is thought, represents the abrogation of all thinghood" (*alles Dinges*).¹ Kant evidently has in mind the simple contrast between what is and what is not, between being and not-being, between something and nothing; and reality is the pure idea of what is, being, something, which is involved in the transcendental meaning of affirmation.

But if this is so, it raises two difficulties. First, what becomes of the third member of the trilogies, namely the infinite judgment and the category of limitation? For it is extremely difficult to see how something and nothing can combine to form an intermediate status. Secondly, negation seems the wrong word for the opposite of reality as a category; as the passage quoted from the *Dialectic*

¹ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. by Norman Kemp Smith (London, 1929), pp. 489f. (A574=B602). All subsequent references to the *Critique of Pure Reason* are to this edition.

shows, the true opposite is the unreality of blank not-being. Both these difficulties, if thought out, suggest that the standpoint of transcendental logic, which Kant adopts, may be somewhat careless of the distinction between subjective and objective—a suspicion which is confirmed by the following statement concerning the infinite judgment: “But transcendental logic also considers what may be the worth or content of a logical affirmation that is made by means of a merely negative predicate, and what is thereby achieved in the way of addition to our total knowledge.”² Here the references to the “worth” of an affirmation and to an “addition to our total knowledge” inevitably have a strong subjective emphasis, which is appropriate to negation but not to reality. So far, then, we can conclude only that reality is a category, corresponding to the affirmative form of judgment as interpreted by transcendental logic, and that it signifies being in contrast to not-being, although there are difficulties in extending this interpretation to other aspects of Kant’s position.

II

We advance a step further when we come to the *Schematism*. There we find that “Reality, in the pure concept of understanding, is that which corresponds to a sensation in general; it is that, therefore, the concept of which in itself points to being (in time). Negation is that the concept of which represents not-being (in time). The opposition of these two thus rests upon the distinction of one and the same time as filled and as empty.”³ Here we note in the first place the same simple contrast between being and not-being as was used for the interpretation of the judgments and the categories; and moreover this whole schematism of the categories of quality not only contains no reference to a third category of limitation, but also is framed on the assumption of only two categories, reality and negation. Furthermore, the expression “is that the concept of which,” used both for reality and for negation, clearly implies that both of them have objective content and are more than mental operations. Hence the term “sensation” means the mental operation apart from its object; and the verb “corresponds to” signifies that there are two terms (mental operation

² *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 108 (A72=B97).

³ *ibid.*, p. 184 (A143=B182).

and object) held in a relation on the basis of which one term may be said to correspond to the other term.

Reality is thus defined as that which in general (*überhaupt*) corresponds to a (*einer*) sensation. I take it that Kant is here compressing two somewhat different ideas: first, reality is used for the object of a single sensation, as when we say, This paper is a reality; second, reality is the general status of all objects of sensations. The difficulty of interpreting Kant's definition arises from the conjunction of *überhaupt* and *einer*. The phrase "a sensation" can hardly mean anything but a particular act of a special sense, so that we cannot suppose Kant has in mind here the transcendental meaning of sensation as practically equivalent to sensibility, which he sometimes uses. But on the other hand, the *überhaupt* indicates that he intends more than the object of a special sense as apprehended by that sense; and since generality is a function, not of sensation, but of understanding and reason, we must suppose that Kant is referring to the object of a sensation as interpreted by the understanding and the reason. This exegesis is supported by the fact that reality, thus defined, is a category and so has the categorial generality of the understanding. Furthermore, the *Dialectic* shows that reason can take over reality from the understanding and frame the idea of an *omnitudo realitatis* or "transcendental substrate that contains, as it were, the whole store of material from which all possible predicates of things must be taken."⁴ Thus, reality is the object of a sensation synthesized with other sensations by the understanding and further generalized by the reason into a common status for all such objects.

Kant now proceeds to maintain that the schemata which add a time element to the categories of reality and negation rest upon the distinction of one and the same time as filled and as empty. The passage is extremely difficult to interpret precisely, but I presume that what Kant has in mind is something like this. Time is the form of all consciousness, so that all conscious operations are characterized by a time quality; but some of these mental operations have also a sensory aspect that connects them with objects in the spatial world. This spatial-objective aspect may be thought of under the analogy of a content that "fills" an otherwise "empty"

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 490 (A575=B603).

container or form, so that we can imagine any particular mental operation as either filled with such a content or not filled. Thus, the schema of reality is a time-form filled with spatial content, while the schema of negation is an empty time-form. Such an interpretation of the passage under discussion disregards Kant's doctrine of the inner sense, of which time is the form; but it would be in conformity with his famous dictum that concepts without percepts are empty. We may pass over the tremendous difficulties of such a position, to bring out the solid meaning it contains. In effect Kant here takes his stand in favor of the old concept of Being that played a preeminent rôle in philosophy from the great Greek thinkers down through the Middle Ages; but he gives the concept a new and fruitful significance by connecting it with sensation. It is no longer a vague suggestion of thinghood or undefinable existence without qualities; it is the definite but general capacity of things to produce sensations in us, and reality is the status which we assign to those objects of our mental operations which have this capacity. Kant thus tends to substitute for the old concepts which had a purely ontological meaning a new concept which preserves the ontological meaning but adds a clear epistemological setting for it. Thus the fundamental significance of reality is given in those experiences in which we are affected in a sensory way by objects, and all affirmation derives its meaning ultimately from the recognition of such objects.

III

This position justifies Kant in employing the phrase *realitas phaenomenon*, reality that appears in sensation; and the phrase is important in indicating that the general contrast between appearance and reality, which later became paramount, is not an original feature of Kant's own thought. *Appearance and Reality* is the title of a book by Mr. Bradley, not by Kant. Kant contrasts phenomena with noumena, and things as they appear with things in themselves; and these contrasts may easily be developed into that between appearance and reality. But that development came later and tended to obscure the insight by which Kant attempted to fuse empiricism and rationalism. For him reality was something that did appear, and indeed its appearance was an essential meaning of the term.

The phrase *realitas phaenomenon*, however, does immediately raise a question about the status of noumena, and we now find⁵ that Kant can also use the phrase *realitas noumenon*. What then is noumenal reality? It seems obvious that if the term reality gets its fundamental meaning from the phenomenal situation, then, in so far as noumenal is opposed to phenomenal, reality is inapplicable to the noumenal; and this conclusion is in harmony with Kant's contention that the categories (which include reality) are inapplicable to things in themselves. Indeed, if noumenon is defined as what is "not to be thought as object of the senses,"⁶ it can have no reality at all in the sense of what in general corresponds to a sensation. And Kant himself draws this conclusion, where he says that the thing in itself "is the cause of appearance and therefore not itself appearance, and . . . can be thought neither as quantity nor as reality. . . ."⁷

On the other hand, that Kant thought of reality as including much besides sensible objects as such is proved not only by the phrase *realitas noumenon*, but also by a large number of other expressions in which the term reality is applied to non-sensible subjects. The first class of such expressions shows that the meaning of reality creeps over from the objects themselves to the experience of the objects. Thus Kant can say: "Our exposition therefore establishes the *reality*, that is, the objective validity of space. . . ."⁸ and the expression "objective reality" is frequently applied to cognition, and even to *a priori* cognition, as for example: "The possibility of experience is, then, what gives objective reality to all our *a priori* modes of knowledge (*Erkenntnissen*)."⁹ So also, besides objective reality, we find "empirical reality,"¹⁰ "absolute and transcendental reality,"¹¹ and "subjective reality."¹²

A plausible explanation of what has here taken place might run as follows. Kant first thought of reality as what corresponds to sensation, where the verb "corresponds" implies a distinction be-

⁵ For example, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 279 (A264=B320).

⁶ *ibid.*, p. 271 (B310).

⁷ *ibid.*, p. 293 (A288=B344).

⁸ *ibid.*, p. 72 (A28=B44).

⁹ *ibid.*, p. 193 (A156=B195).

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 78 (A35=B52).

¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 79 (A36=B53).

¹² *ibid.*, p. 79 (A37=B53).

tween sensation and reality, so that sensation is the purely subjective counterpart, exclusive of its object. He then proceeds to think of sensation as the matter for the operations of a higher faculty, the understanding, and here sensation means the total sensory situation including the object, so that he can use such an expression as: "For reality is bound up with sensation, the matter of experience. . . ." ¹³ Next, since "*understanding* and *sensibility* . . . can determine objects *only when they are employed in conjunction*," ¹⁴ reality becomes a function of the conjoined faculties, where it is synonymous with validity of cognition, and this validity is called objective validity. Finally, since objective reality is cognitively established partly by an objective matter and partly by subjective forms, even the latter have their share in reality; and here Kant can speak of objective reality as "necessary conditions of experience." ¹⁵

It is presumably from this point of view that the meaning of the phrase "*noumenal reality*" must be approached. The precise interpretation of the expression will depend largely upon one's particular understanding of noumenon; but since I do not believe that Kant's formulation of this concept has been justified by subsequent criticism, I do not feel called upon either to advance my own interpretation or take my stand on one of those already offered. In a general way, it seems possible to say that noumenal reality must mean the final result of all the cognitive faculties working upon the original data of sensation; but even this minimum of significance seems questionable, if we accept honestly Kant's negative or problematical definition of noumena, offered in the second edition. For he expressly asserts as one of the marks of a problematic concept that its "*objective reality*" "cannot be in any way known," ¹⁶ since it is not an object of the senses. I see no way of avoiding the conclusion that there is a fundamental ambiguity in Kant's thought at this point.

Nevertheless, the foregoing discussion proves that Kant does use reality both for the object of sensation and for the thing in itself. Reality is contrasted with negation and not-being, and this

¹³ *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 241 (A223 = B270).

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 274 (A258 = B314).

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 193 (A157 = B196).

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 371 (B310).

contrast does not correspond to the other contrast between appearances and things in themselves. The latter distinction could be developed in two directions: first, by depreciating appearance as mere appearance, the thing in itself tends to become identified with reality; second, by depreciating the thing in itself as mere concept, appearances tend to become identified with reality. Both of these developments have occurred in the history of philosophy; but it is part of the greatness of Kant that both emphases are found in his thought, though we may legitimately complain that he has not adequately systematized them.¹⁷

IV

The next main point concerning reality is made in the principle for the *Anticipations of Perception*, namely, that "in all appearances, the real that is an object of sensation has intensive magnitude, that is, a degree."¹⁸ This subject of degrees in reality has already been treated briefly under the *Schematism*; but that treatment contains no information that is not more extensively given in the *Anticipations*, except for one sentence whose meaning is rendered extremely doubtful by an uncertainty in the reading,¹⁹ and I shall accordingly neglect the whole passage. So far as I understand the argument in the *Anticipations*, the only part of it that is germane to my present purpose is that which attempts to prove that reality has degrees. This is done, in accordance with the general position taken in the *Deduction of the Categories*, by an argument from the necessary conditions of sensation to the objects of sensation, more

¹⁷ cf. "nothing that can belong to an object in itself, but merely the appearance of something" (*ibid.*, p. 83 [A44=B61]); "mere appearance, in which nothing that belongs to a thing in itself can be found" (*ibid.*, p. 84 [A45=B62]). For the other emphasis, cf. "a mere idea the objective reality of which is very far from being proved by the fact that reason requires it" (*ibid.*, p. 500 [A592=B620]); "only as object in *idea* and not in reality" (*ibid.*, p. 566 [A697=B725]).

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 201 (B207).

¹⁹ The sentence occurs on p. 184 (A143=B182), and the question is whether it should contain *nicht*, as Wille reads, or no *nicht*, as with Erdmann. Kemp Smith in his *Commentary*, p. 351 (rev. ed.), published in 1923, translates: "As time is only the form of intuition, and consequently of objects as appearances, what corresponds in them to sensation is the transcendental matter of all objects as *things in themselves*, thinghood (*Sachheit*), reality." But in his translation of the whole *Critique*, published in 1929, the same sentence is rendered: "Since time is merely the form of intuition, and so of objects as appearances, that in the objects which corresponds to sensation is not the transcendental matter of all objects as *things in themselves* (thinghood, reality)."

particularly from the intensive magnitude of sensations to degrees of reality.

The first question is, therefore, what Kant means by intensity of sensation. He begins by distinguishing empirical consciousness from pure consciousness—empirical consciousness contains sensation and therefore reality, while pure consciousness is merely formal, such as is found in the intuitions of space and time, which cannot be perceived in and by themselves. He then says: "Now from empirical consciousness to pure consciousness a graduated transition is possible, the real in the formal completely vanishing and a merely formal *a priori* consciousness of the manifold in space and time remaining. Consequently there is also possible a synthesis in the process of generating the magnitude of a sensation from its beginning in pure intuition = 0, up to any required magnitude."²⁰ These sentences must mean that in pure consciousness there is no reality because such consciousness is completely formal and contains no sensory element; but we know that it is possible to take an empirical cognition and gradually abstract its empirical or sensory element,²¹ so that there is a transition with an infinite gradation depending on the amount of sensory material any particular consciousness contains. It seems clear that the magnitude involved in this transition is the amount of sensory material in consciousness, and if so, it is improper to describe it as intensity of sensation. Nevertheless, Kant not only uses this expression but proceeds to assert in a perfectly dogmatic fashion that "Corresponding to this intensity of sensation, an *intensive magnitude*, that is, a degree of influence on the sense must be ascribed to all objects of perception, in so far as the perception contains sensation." But this assertion would mean that zero degree of reality would be zero degree of influence by an object on a special sense, that is, a situation in which, for example, I do not see an object in the environment; whereas, according to the previous passage, zero degree of reality ought to mean a purely formal consciousness of an *a priori* factor which has no sensory equivalent. Furthermore, the statement that formal *a priori* consciousness lacks reality appears to be in direct conflict both with the assertion of the reality of space²²

²⁰ *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 201f. (B208).

²¹ cf. "abstraction being made of its empirical quality" (*ibid.*, p. 207 [A175=B217]).

²² *ibid.*, p. 72 (A28=B44).

and with the contention that *a priori* cognitions have objective reality;²³ and if the defense be made that in the one case Kant is speaking of a sensory element in knowledge, while in the other two cases he refers to general validity of cognition, then the distinction implies that it is possible to establish reality on other than a sensory basis, which would not agree with Kant's main position.

Finally, so far as intensity of sensation means a psychological intensity of feeling, the "receptivity" of a special sense,²⁴ it seems possible, in a general way and with allowance for organic conditions, to argue from its degree to a degree of some quality (like weight) in the object, as modern psychological experiments have shown; but this quality of the object is not the same thing as its reality—a one-hundredth of a gram is just as real as a gram. On the other hand, so far as intensity of sensation means magnitude of sensory material in a cognitive state of consciousness, the question is surely not one regarding the amount of such material but of the way it is used; for an illusion seems to contain as much sensory material as a veridical perception; and as Kant himself maintains, a formal cognition which contains zero degree of sensation may have objective validity.

V

The foregoing situation brings out clearly the need of a comprehensive critique of error, illusion, and truth, because the definition of reality as what in general corresponds to a sensation takes no account of the distinction between veridical and illusory sensations; and if this distinction is neglected, reality would have to include objects of illusory sense experience. Now Kant does of course discriminate illusion from appearance in a short section of the *General Observations on Transcendental Aesthetic*,²⁵ and although he gives no systematic account of illusion, his expressions cover the following three situations: (1) imagining or dreaming of something which is not "actually given"; (2) the case of the "two handles which were formerly ascribed to Saturn" (probably to be interpreted as an extraordinary perception, like the bent stick in water); (3) ascribing objective reality to forms of representation

²³ *ibid.*, p. 193 (A156 = B195).

²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 205 (A172 = B214).

²⁵ *ibid.*, Sec. 3, pp. 88f. (B6).

such as space and time, or attributing empirical qualities to things in themselves. Again, Kant discusses illusion at the beginning of the *Dialectic*,²⁶ differentiating illusion from appearance, and distinguishing empirical and logical illusion from transcendental illusion, with which he is particularly concerned.

These two passages suggest the following observations. (1) In neither of them does Kant connect the subject of illusion in any systematic way with the idea of reality. It is therefore natural to suppose that by reality he means the ultimate sensory material of knowledge at its rawest, even before the question of illusion is raised. (2) If this is so, why should the term reality be applied to the material of sensation, or what new insight is gained by adding to the material of sensation the epithet real? The only answer that I can think of is that reality means the bare fact of objectivity, and thus suggests that an individual subject can in this situation get out beyond himself to something other. But before going on with this question, it is necessary to notice the connection between reality and actuality.

VI

Kant's explicit doctrine of actuality (*Wirklichkeit*) is given in the *Postulates of Empirical Thought*, where the term is defined in conjunction with possibility and necessity. Kant thus follows Leibniz and the rationalistic tradition in departing from the Aristotelian and Thomist contrast between actuality and potentiality, and in joining actuality with possibility and necessity; but at the same time he tries to overcome the purely rationalistic basis for the three concepts and give them the same objective status that Aristotle and Thomas had assigned to actuality and potentiality. Accordingly, he defines the actual as "that which is bound up with [zusammenhängt] the material conditions of experience, that is, with sensation."²⁷ But in elucidating this concept, Kant points out that it is not limited to situations where an object is present to sense, but rather covers all cases where there is "connection of the object with some actual [wirklichen] perception, in accordance with the analogies of experience, which define all real

²⁶ *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 297 (A293 = B349f.).

²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 239 (A218 = B266).

[*reale*] connection in an experience in general.”²⁸ Now this sentence would imply that reality is defined, not by the postulates of empirical thought, but by the analogies of experience; and in that case possibility, actuality, and necessity would have to be interpreted as modalities in the subjective cognitive attitude, or as Kant himself expresses it, “they only express the relation of the concept to the faculty of knowledge.”²⁹ From this point of view the real could be conceived as possible or actual or necessary, depending upon the subjective attitude in any particular case. On the other hand, Kant also views possibility, actuality, and necessity as objective conditions; and when he adopts this view, reality is limited to actuality, and in fact the two terms appear synonymous. In a note³⁰ to A37=B53, Kemp Smith says: “*Wirklich* here, as often elsewhere, is used by Kant as the adjective corresponding to the substantive *Realität*, and in such cases it is more suitably translated by ‘real’ than by ‘actual.’” Furthermore, actuality is usually interchangeable with existence, so that when Kant gives the schema for the category of existence, he calls it “the schema of actuality;”³¹ and in the criticism of the ontological argument, existence and reality are used as equivalent terms. Hence reality tends to become identified with actuality and existence, and contrasted with what is merely possible. Beyond pointing out this ambiguity between reality limited to actuality and existence, and reality capable of being conceived as possible, actual, or necessary, I do not think it profitable to go on in the present connection, except to say that the whole ambiguity seems to me to turn on the very slippery idea of “possible experience,” employed by Kant and frequently used by empiricists to admit to reality whatever they want to admit and exclude whatever they want to exclude.

VII

We must now raise the question whether reality applies to the self. We have seen that Kant's initial doctrine identifies the concept of reality with the objects of sensation, and from this stand-

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 243 (A225=B272).

²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 239 (A219=B266).

³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 79, note 3.

³¹ *ibid.*, p. 185 (A145=B184).

point the term could not be applied to the subject which has the sensation. But we have also seen that in the course of his argument Kant gradually extends the original meaning of reality till it covers a good many objects that would not at first seem to fall under it; and we are thus led to ask to what extent the full and final concept of reality is applicable to the self or subject.

Kant's various doctrines concerning the self form such an intricate web of ideas and are open to such various interpretations that the only feasible procedure here is to make a statement of what seems germane and regard it as a working hypothesis. As such, I offer the following. There are three types of cognitive situations in which the self is involved: (1) when I am conscious of an external object or bodily condition; (2) when I am conscious of my own mental act, such as a volition; (3) when I am conscious of myself or my own existence. The "I" in (1), which is conscious of external objects may be identified with the mental acts of (2) and called the empirical self, because it is known empirically under the same conditions that apply to knowledge of other objects; it is therefore an appearance or phenomenon.³² But the "I" of (2), together with both the "I" and the self of (3), is not known, but has to be assumed as a necessary presupposition of the fact of self-consciousness, which is expressed by both (2) and (3).

If now we attempt to apply the concept of reality to these situations, understanding by reality what corresponds to sensation, it can easily cover the objects of (1) and the mental acts of (2); from which we can draw the conclusion that the self is real so far as it is mental acts which can become objects for consciousness. But there seems no possible way of legitimately extending reality to cover the "I" of (2) or the self-consciousness of (3). The ultimate subject of all conscious activity thus lies outside reality, if reality is limited to what can be objective to a consciousness. Such a position would seem to imply a thoroughgoing suspicion of subjectivity as such; and there is a strain of this attitude all through Kant, which gave rise to the Hegelian parody of Kant as holding that what we think is false because it is we who think it.

³² As Kant phrases it in the preface to the *Critique of Practical Reason* (p. 91), "the thinking subject is to itself in internal intuition only a phenomenon." (References to the *Critique of Practical Reason* are to pages in T. K. Abbott, *Kant's Theory of Ethics*, 6th ed., London, 1923.)

But when Kant in his later works came to deal with the moral and practical side of consciousness, he found a somewhat different situation. Here consciousness appears as the bearer of freedom, and this freedom, Kant holds, has its reality just as much as the objects of sensation. As he phrases it in the *Critique of Judgment*, "All facts belong either to the *natural concept*, which proves its reality in the objects of sense, or to the *concept of freedom*, which sufficiently establishes its reality through the causality of reason in regard to certain effects in the world of sense, possible through it, which it incontrovertibly postulates in the moral law."³³ Here the first point to notice is that although freedom does not belong to the natural order, it has reality like the natural order; and this reality seems to be established in the same locus as that of nature, namely in the "world of sense." It appears therefore that Kant is using the same concept of reality here as in the first *Critique*, that is, the object of sensation; and his terminology seems to mean that the reality of freedom, duty, and the moral self is proved by their sensuous effects. I can, for example, see people do their duty in actions which obviously run counter to their self-interest; and I can also observe the effects of my own will operating under the moral law. But such an interpretation suggests that the object of my knowledge in this situation is the sensuously perceived act, and I merely infer the moral self as the cause of the act. It is, however, quite clear that this is not an adequate interpretation of Kant's thought. Let me quote another passage. ". . . There is one rational Idea (which is susceptible in itself of no presentation in intuition, and consequently, of no theoretical proof of its possibility) which also comes under things of fact. This is the Idea of *freedom*, whose reality, regarded as that of a particular kind of causality . . . may be exhibited by means of practical laws of pure Reason, and, consequently, in experience."³⁴ Here we have the same reference of reality to actual actions as in the former quotation; but beside them now appears the form of practical laws, which are said to exhibit the reality of the Idea. And in the *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant says specifically, "It is . . . the moral law of which we become directly

³³ Sec. 91, p. 414. (References to the *Critique of Judgment* are to Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, tr. by J. H. Bernard, London, 1914.)

³⁴ *Critique of Judgment*, Sec. 91, p. 405.

conscious . . . that *first* presents itself to us,”³⁵ and “We may call the consciousness of this fundamental law a fact of reason.”³⁶ Furthermore, the argument of the *Preface* to this *Critique* is clearly to the effect that we know the moral law as “an object” of pure practical reason and this law thus has “objective reality”; but this law would be impossible without freedom of the self, so that “freedom is the *ratio essendi* of the moral law” and thus its reality is “proved.”

These passages indicate that, from a cognitive point of view, reality enters the moral situation in the form of moral law, and that it is a reality because it is a fact of which we are conscious when we are moral. Its reality lies in its being objective to a consciousness in a cognitive situation. This reality (the moral law) also has another relation to consciousness, a practical influence in determining the will, but this relation Kant says is completely inexplicable—“how a law can be directly and of itself a determining principle of the will . . . this is, for human reason, an insoluble problem. . . .”³⁷ This of course raises the question how we know that the law determines the will if we do not know how it can; but on that point Kant’s position is highly ambiguous. Sometimes he speaks as if we could prove the moral self to be real by reference to the reality of the moral law, or even as if its reality were derived from that of the law.³⁸ Sometimes he says we are conscious of ourselves as intelligences or things in themselves.³⁹ And in one place,⁴⁰ he uses the curious phraseology that the idea of freedom, like that of immortality and of God, is not knowledge or cognition (*Erkenntnisse*), but it is a thought (*Gedanken*).

The net result of this analysis would seem to be as follows. (1) The practical situation differs from the cognitive situation in that the self in the cognitive situation is subject to objects, while in the practical situation the objects are subject to the self. (2) The practical situation also differs from the ordinary or typical cognitive situation in presenting as a fact what is only a possibility or idea or problematic concept for cognition, namely, freedom and the

³⁵ Abbott, *Kant’s Theory of Ethics*, p. 117.

³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 120.

³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 165.

³⁸ cf. *ibid.*, pp. 117 and 146f.

³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 191.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p. 232.

moral law. The practical situation thus has a cognitive aspect in which the moral law is the object of some kind of cognition, and as object it has reality. This reality, though "objective," is only "practical," as distinguished from the reality of the speculative reason; but what is meant by the phrase "only practical reality," or indeed how reality can be practical at all, I do not know. (3) In the cognitive situation it is possible to make particular acts of consciousness, both awareness and volitions, objects of (presumably) another act of consciousness and so give them reality as objects; but the ultimate I or unity underlying these acts is never an object and cannot be given objective reality. In the practical situation we meet what is presumably this same I or unity as a thing in itself or noumenon or intelligence or "a cause that is independent of sensibility"; and Kant says that we are conscious of it as such.

VIII

The definition of reality as what corresponds to sensation, and the consequent tendency to identify it with objectivity must be predicated upon the acceptance of a spectator attitude, which demands the distinction of subject and object, such as is typical of natural science. But Kant's treatment as a whole suggests that this attitude results in two serious consequences in regard to the self, the first in the cognitive situation, the second in the practical situation.

In the cognitive situation, so long as you adopt the spectator attitude and explain knowledge as a relation between a subject and an object, there is no way of making the subject completely into an object and so bringing it within the sphere of objective reality. You can do it to a certain extent by making a previous act of consciousness the object of a subsequent act of consciousness; but no matter how long you produce this series of introspections, you can never establish its unity if the subject and the object are two different things. Now Kant does maintain that you can make acts of consciousness into objects, and so introduce objectivity and the empirical method into the doctrine of the self; hence Kemp Smith is justified in holding that in the Kantian view, "The subjective is not to be regarded as opposite in nature to the objective, but as a subspecies within it. It does not proceed parallel with the

sequence of natural existence, but is itself part of the natural system which consciousness reveals."⁴¹ But this is only part of the story, for Kant steadfastly maintained that the ultimate I could not be reduced to "the natural system which consciousness reveals" when it makes the subject-object distinction, and of course Professor Kemp Smith is quite aware of this fact. In the famous note on the "I think,"⁴² where Kant maintains that the existence involved is not the category, he really shows that the situation cannot be reduced to the typical subject-object form. And in the essay *Concerning the Advances made by Metaphysics since Leibniz and Wolff* he puts the matter as follows: "I am conscious to myself of myself—this is a thought which contains a twofold I, the I as subject and the I as object. How it should be possible that I, the I that thinks, should be an object . . . to myself, and so should be able to distinguish myself from myself, it is altogether beyond our powers to explain. It is, however, an undoubted fact . . . and has as a consequence the complete distinguishing of us off from the whole animal kingdom, since we have no ground for ascribing to animals the power to say I to themselves."⁴³ Here Kant returns to the subject-object distinction, but is forced into the position that there is a fact, which is a fact, but wholly inexplicable on the principles of his epistemology. The subject can never be completely transformed into an object, and to that extent it cannot, on Kant's principles, be known or given a status in objective reality.⁴⁴

The other serious consequence to which Kant's general position leads him concerns the practical situation. Here there is the same attempt to prove reality by means of objectivity; but the object in this case is the moral law. We are, says Kant, conscious of the moral law as "given," i.e., objective, not manufactured by subjective desires, in the same sense as objects of sensation are given; and there thus appears the same suspicion of subjectivity in the practical sphere as we have noted previously in the speculative.

⁴¹ Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'* (London, rev. ed. 1923), p. 313.

⁴² *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 378 (B422).

⁴³ Kant, *Werke*, Hartenstein, Vol. VIII, p. 530; translated by Kemp Smith, *Commentary*, p. li, note 2.

⁴⁴ cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 246 (B277): "the representation 'I am,' which expresses the consciousness that can accompany all thought, immediately includes in itself the existence of a subject; but it does not so include any knowledge of that subject."

This position suggests that the practical self is real to the extent that it is conscious of the moral law, and conversely that it lacks reality in so far as it fails to recognize the law. But the question is, what does Kant include under consciousness of the law, and specifically, can a person be conscious of the law and yet not subject himself to it? If this question is answered in the affirmative, then Kant can maintain that all rational beings know the law, though some of them do not obey it; and thus objective reality might be given to all selves through their consciousness of objective law. But this result would only have been gained by divorcing consciousness (of law) from practice; and in that case consciousness is purely cognitive, so that, on the principles of Kant's epistemology in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the law would be merely a problematic idea and the whole situation would therefore lack objective reality. On the other hand, if Kant holds that in the practical situation consciousness of the law and subjection to it are identical, then immoral persons are not conscious of the law and so are without objective reality. But this is clearly impossible, for immorality and unreality are two different things, and a person whose will is bad is just as real as a person whose will is good. Hence, no matter which horn of the dilemma you take, you cannot establish the reality of the practical self by means of the objectivity of the moral law.

However, there is an aspect of the moral self, which Kant holds to be unquestionable without any appeal to objectivity at all, namely, the causality of reason. This causality of reason is described by Kant in different phrases: reason proclaims itself to be the source of law or legislative; the autonomy of the will; a faculty of absolute spontaneity; consciousness of self as a thing in itself or an intelligence or a cause independent of sensibility. With regard to these attributes Kant admits again and again the impossibility of explanation, calls them strange or without parallel, and even goes so far as to express surprise. The point is that here in the creativity of practical consciousness you are beyond the subject-object relationship and the region of objective reality; you have to admit that new knowledge may and does modify old ways of acting, but how it works in any particular case is hidden from outside examination. Thus, just as in the cognitive situation there was an activity of the self that eluded the attempt of the spectator to give

it objective reality and yet had to be admitted as a fact, so in the practical situation there is an aspect of the self that lies outside the field of empirical observation and objective reality but still has to be admitted as a fact, namely, the causality of reason in practice.

We come therefore in the end to the question whether there is any reason why I should be less real than the objects I notice. Here, however, we must be fair to Kant. The word reality for him seems to have had a meaning at least partially set by its etymology, for he several times uses the Latin *realitas* and the German words *Ding*, *Sache*, and *Sachheit* to bring out its connotations; and no doubt all these terms suggested to his mind some kind of material or at least non-psychical quality, usually associated with the objects of sensation. Nevertheless, his own treatment of the concept tended to make it in the end quite different from the beginning. It first emerges as one of twelve categories, where it is, so to speak, on all fours with the eleven others and denotes the "things" whose existence is presented to us in sensation. But as the main outlines of Kant's epistemology take shape, the limitation of knowledge to phenomena gives to the objects of sensation an altogether preeminent status; and reality more and more becomes a kind of supreme and ultimate philosophical category. Subjectively, it takes on the significance of a general validity of thinking, so that Kant can speak of knowledge "having" objective reality; while objectively, it represents that which organized knowledge as a whole reveals. If we go to Kant with the question of what organized knowledge does reveal, the answer would have to be understood in terms of his whole philosophy, with allowance made for the modification of earlier views in the light of later insights. The initial minimum would be the totality of phenomena, organized according to all the principles of understanding, as specified in the *Critique of Pure Reason*; but to that would have to be added the intelligent or noumenal aspects of the world, presented in the works on morality, and the combination would have to be interpreted "teleologically" in accordance with the position taken in the *Critique of Judgment*.

But from this final point of view, the beginning in the doctrine of the categories appears unsatisfactory. Reality is not one of twelve primitive elements in a composite, but the final product of

a complicated process. To be sure, we can say that unless reality is there at the start, it will not be present at the end—that, I take it, is the ultimate foundation on which Kant's epistemology is built. But if we ask what it is that is present at the beginning and remains at the end, Kant answers: objects in a cognitive situation. I have tried to show the disadvantages of this answer. Briefly they are as follows: Why call objects in a cognitive situation reality? Why not just call them objects? And why is the object, but not the subject, reality? These questions inevitably show that reality has a meaning other than that of mere objectivity, and that meaning I hold to be derived primarily from the elimination of error. For it is a matter of experience that not every cognitive situation yields knowledge—there may be error or illusion, sometimes in very subtle forms; and the only method of discovering whether the object is a true object or not is by comparing one cognition with others and making an interpretation. To be sure, the genus to which knowledge belongs may well be cognitive *commercium* between two entities called respectively subject and object; but its differentia, by which it is distinguished from the psychological processes of animals, is the distinction of truth from error. Kant has given the genus without the differentia. Reality thus takes its significance, not from the bare fact of objectivity in a *commercium*, but from the complication that arises in the process of interpretation which Kant calls understanding and which is the locus of truth and error. But if this is so, there is no reason for attaching reality to the object rather than the subject; and indeed it would seem that unless the subject were as real as the object, the relation between them would be impossible. There is no ground for making objects the test of the reality of subjects, and the only ground for suspecting subjectivity is its liability to make mistakes in cognitive situations. That, however, is counterbalanced by its capacity to avoid mistakes and establish truth, and it has nothing to do with practical creativity in so far as this is separated from cognition. In fine, Kant's attempt to found the concept of reality on the fact of objectivity is unsatisfactory, first because it neglects the truth-error distinction, and secondly because it suggests doubt regarding the status of the subject.

But Kant was surely right in holding that reality is an idea which arises in the cognitive situation and has a definite epistemo-

logical setting. It is just this definite epistemological correlation which gives the concept its advantage over the older terms, being, substance, existence, which were purely ontological. In effect, Kant put modern philosophy on a new track by bringing to the fore this concept of reality and showing that what we know and how we know it, ontology and epistemology, are correlated and mutual. Since then reality has tended more and more to assume the place of a supreme philosophical idea.

V I

KANT'S CRITICISM OF METAPHYSICS

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KANT'S CRITICISM OF METAPHYSICS

KANT'S theory of the nature and value of metaphysical cognition has both a positive and a negative aspect. Negatively, it holds that metaphysical judgments are incapable of proof or disproof and, if meaningful at all, are meaningful in a sense quite different from that in which the judgments of science are meaningful. On its positive side, it tries to prove that although the judgments of metaphysics are thus at a unique disadvantage an appeal to them is necessary whenever we attempt to justify certain types of belief—notably, the belief in the possibility of moral action. Each of these conclusions forms an essential and integral part of Kant's final system. And if one were to attempt to assess the value of the Kantian philosophy as a whole it would be necessary to consider each in detail.

In this essay, however, I shall discuss Kant's negative thesis only, since it is the more disputable, the more fundamental, and certainly the more timely of the two. His positive thesis, indeed, is not disputable at all. If the sense of moral obligation is taken at its face value—i.e. if we are *really* convinced that all men are in fact bound in their actions to conform to certain principles of conduct—it seems impossible to evade a belief in some sort of transcendental reality as the source of these principles, whether we conceive it to be a god, a "higher self" within us, or a hierarchy of intrinsic ends. As Kant himself shows, the differentia of a *moral* principle is that we acknowledge it to be a universal command. And if we accept it as such we must postulate a universal and eternal source from which it emanates. A purely naturalistic sanction—such as fear or utility—will never explain its unconditional character.

Again, just *because* of the inescapability of metaphysical speculation in the moral sphere, the negative criticism is the more fundamental. If it is true that the reality of the moral experience implies a metaphysical foundation, and if metaphysical judgments are incapable of proof or disproof and their intelligibility suspect, it certainly follows that we must abandon all hope of a rational

defense of morals. Thus Kant's positive position, by its very nature enhances the importance of discussing the issues raised on its negative side.

Finally, a consideration of the negative thesis is more timely. Whereas there is, today, comparatively little discussion of the relationship of metaphysics to morals, the question of the possibility of metaphysics occupies the dead centre of contemporary interest. And this is the very issue Kant is raising on what I have called the negative side of his theory. In fact, the considerations which he himself urges against the value of metaphysics are of the very type put forward recently by anti-metaphysical schools of thought.

Kant's negative criticism of metaphysics is, in other words, of more than historical interest. And there is ample justification, therefore, in singling it out for separate treatment. This, in any event, is what I propose to do. And I shall find it convenient in what follows, first, to state briefly and with little or no critical comment, Kant's particular objections to metaphysics; second, to show in what respect they appear to be deficient; and, third, to inquire whether they can be so reformulated as to avoid the principal difficulties of Kant's own formulation.

I. STATEMENT OF KANT'S ARGUMENT

A. The Limits of Human Knowledge

Kant's objection to metaphysics can best be understood in terms of that theory of the limits of human knowledge with which the *Analytic* concludes. And this theory can be formulated in two ways: it may be stated—as both Kant and his commentators usually do—in terms of the familiar distinction between *phenomena* and *noumena*, or it may be stated in terms of Kant's theory of meaning and proof. The latter formulation, however, is more desirable in the present context. Since the distinction between *phenomena* and *noumena* has, on Kant's own showing, a *metaphysical* as well as an epistemological interpretation, an appeal to it here would tend to compromise the clarity of the exposition. Moreover, since Kant's criticism itself quite explicitly takes the form of an analysis of the intelligibility and proof-capacity of metaphysical judgments it is only by defining the limits of knowledge in terms of meaning and

proof that a smooth and natural transition may be effected between the arguments of the *Analytic* and *Dialectic*. Accordingly, it is this formulation that I shall employ in summarizing the background of Kant's argument.

Kant's criterion of meaning (which grows out of the metaphysical deduction of the categories) may be stated most simply as follows: *Any proposition is meaningful which refers to objects exemplifying or embodying the structure of one or more of the categories of the understanding.* And any proposition which lacks this property is meaningless, becoming for the mind which entertains it a mere series of sounds or marks which no longer function symbolically. Kant accepts this criterion because he believes that all empirical judgments conform to one or the other of the twelve types he lists¹ and that the categories of the pure understanding parallel these in form. It is important to note, however, that the distinction introduced by this criterion is not identical with the distinction between phenomenal and noumenal objects. Since, as Kant holds, we can at least speculate or guess about the character of the noumenal world, it also follows that we can frame meaningful propositions about it. The only difference on the score of intelligibility between propositions about phenomenal and propositions about noumenal objects is that in the case of the former we know, even when they are not true, that they are referring to the kinds of objects that *could* exist phenomenally, while in the case of the latter we lack this type of assurance.

Kant also introduces in the *Analytic* a principle for determining whether any proposition can or cannot be rationally assigned truth values. This criterion is: *To be capable of proof or disproof a proposition must be about an object or objects of possible experience.* And he meant, apparently, by "objects of possible experience" those objects which are not merely *like* the objects of sense-perception, but which are also such that it is possible to determine whether any proposition about them does or does not, correspond or cohere,² with actually perceived objects. In other words, propo-

¹ *Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. by Norman Kemp Smith (London, 1929), pp. 106ff. (A70=B95). All subsequent references to the first *Critique* are to this edition.

² Kant, it seems to me, never clearly distinguished these two criteria. His failure to discuss the process of verification makes it impossible to determine just how he would have characterized the relation between a perceptual proposition and the sense data proving it to be true.

sitions about objects of possible experience—and so, propositions which are provable or disprovable—are those whose truth and falsity are determinable in terms of correspondence to or coherence with the objects of perception. It is this, rather than the preceding, principle of classification, which is basic to Kant's distinction between the two realms of objects: phenomenal and noumenal.

With these two criteria Kant was then able to classify the propositions comprising human knowledge. In terms of this classification, all propositions fall into one or the other of the following classes:

1. *Propositions which refer to objects exemplifying none of the twelve categories.*

These are meaningless propositions, and so, in effect, not propositions at all.³

2. *Propositions which do refer to objects exemplifying one or more of the twelve categories.* These subdivide into:

2a. *Intelligible propositions which are not capable of proof or disproof in terms of correspondence to, or coherence with, perceptual objects.* In this class fall meaningful propositions about noumenal objects.

2b. *Intelligible propositions which are capable of proof or disproof in terms of correspondence to or coherence with perceptual objects.* In this class fall all propositions about phenomenal objects.

Now, since this classification is presumably exhaustive, it obviously provides us with a basis for defining the boundaries of human knowledge in a wider or a narrower fashion. If we choose, we may define these boundaries in terms of intelligibility, and assert that knowledge comprises all propositions referring to objects whose form embodies one or more of the twelve categories; or, alternatively, that knowledge comprises, more narrowly, only those propositions having this property and the *additional* property of being provable or disprovable by an appeal to the objects of perception.

As it turned out, Kant, for reasons which he failed to make clear, chose to define knowledge in the narrower sense. It may be that he

³ Unlike the logical positivists, Kant offers no explanation of the *apparent* meaning of meaningless propositions.

was here being influenced by his inability (which I shall discuss shortly) to decide whether metaphysical propositions are or are not meaningful and so felt that the more narrow definition (restricting the use of the word, "knowledge," to *provable* propositions) provided a surer basis for rationalizing his personal distrust of speculative metaphysics. At any rate, having made the choice, he was now in a position, once he had determined the specific character of metaphysical propositions, to argue that it is not proper to classify them as *knowledge* or *science*.

And it is to this analysis of metaphysical propositions that I shall now turn.

B. The Nature of Metaphysical Propositions

There are certain difficulties standing in the way of a clear understanding of what Kant meant by the term "metaphysics." He uses the word in an exceedingly loose way throughout the entire first *Critique*. Sometimes it is given a meaning as inclusive as the meaning of the word, "philosophy." At other times, it is quite clearly employed as a name for the study of some one *particular* group of philosophic problems. Indeed, Kant himself appears to be aware of this vacillation, and is, apparently, trying to rectify the resultant confusion, when, in the chapter on the *Architectonic of Pure Reason*, he distinguishes no less than *four* distinct meanings of the term, ranging from "metaphysics in the widest sense" to "metaphysics in the most limited sense." I shall not, however, attempt to catalogue and criticize these various definitions here. I do not believe that there is any genuinely univocal sense for the word, "metaphysics," and in addition, when one comes to examine Kant's actual usage in the *Dialectic* and in the *Prolegomena*, it is clear enough—despite his loose terminology elsewhere—to discover what he had in mind when he set out to criticize "metaphysical" propositions. I shall, accordingly, assume that Kant's mode of defining the propositions of metaphysics in the *Dialectic*, summarizes what for him were their most important and distinctive characteristics, and is, in general, at least *one* valid way of distinguishing between metaphysical and non-metaphysical propositions.

In the *Prolegomena* Kant lays it down as a principle that any science may be differentiated from all other sciences on one and

perhaps all of the following grounds: it may differ in the *kind of object* its propositions refer to, in the *source* of those propositions, or in their *form*.⁴ And he proceeds both here and in the *Dialectic* to characterize the propositions of metaphysics in all three ways. First, as regards their *form*, the propositions of metaphysics, like the basic propositions of the natural sciences and mathematics, are *synthetic* and *universal* in character.⁵

As regards their *object*, he points out that metaphysical propositions are, in general, about *unconditioned* objects. And he defines unconditioned objects as objects of which two propositions are true: (a) they are undetermined in their existence or characteristics by anything outside themselves, and (b) in being known they provide a knowledge of *all* the conditions which determine that some given conditioned object or class of objects *shall exist* and *shall have the properties they do*.⁶ In this respect, the propositions of metaphysics differ from all other propositions since the latter are always about conditioned objects, i.e. objects which are *not* absolutely self-determined and the knowledge of which does *not* provide an absolutely sufficient explanation for other existent objects.

Finally, as regards their *source*, the propositions of metaphysics are also distinct and unique both because they cannot be derived as generalizations from experience (and hence must in some sense be transcendental in origin), and also because the transcendental source of their form is different from the transcendental sources of the forms of intuition and of the understanding. This special source he calls the "faculty of reason."⁷

⁴ *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, tr. by Mahaffy and Bernard (London, 1915), Section I.

⁵ As he says: "Its [Metaphysics'] business is not merely to analyze concepts which we make for ourselves *a priori* of things and thereby to clarify them analytically, but to extend our *a priori* knowledge" (*Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 54 [A11]).

⁶ *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 315 ff. (A321 ff. = B378 ff.). In addition, Kant argues here that these two propositions about the general properties of unconditioned objects imply each other. This, I think is wrong. It may be that proposition (b) implies proposition (a) but it is difficult to see why, if proposition (a) is true, proposition (b) must be true also. An object may be completely self-determined without providing insight into the necessary and sufficient conditions of the existence of another object.

⁷ On the latter point, however, Kant vacillates. As Norman Kemp Smith points out (*A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'* [London, 1923], pp. 426 ff.), he sometimes identifies the general source of metaphysical concepts with the categories of the understanding operating beyond the realm of phenomena, while at other times

Having established these defining characteristics, he then proceeds to draw two conclusions:

First, metaphysical propositions cannot be proved or disproved in the same way that non-metaphysical propositions can. Perception reveals conditioned and never unconditioned objects, since intuition and the understanding always represent any object given through sensibility as spatially, temporally, and logically dependent upon other objects so given. Hence, metaphysical propositions, or propositions about unconditioned objects, fall into the class of propositions about non-perceivable objects and cannot be verified by an appeal to perception. And to render the argument more specific, he further points out that metaphysical propositions are in fact always about either the pure, transcendental ego, the world of space and time as a whole (i.e. the phenomenal world) or the source of all being and all possibility (i.e. God); and that it is clearly the case that none of these can be given in perception.

Second, if we take as our criterion of intelligibility a reference to objects embodying the categories of the understanding, metaphysical propositions, being about unconditioned objects, must be incomprehensible and unintelligible, since the category of the unconditioned is not one of the twelve categories of the understanding. This assertion, however, is open to two distinctly different interpretations: (a) if the criterion suggested is taken to describe a *necessary* condition of intelligibility then, indeed, the propositions of metaphysics are *unequivocally meaningless*, as the assertion suggests; but (b) if the criterion is taken to describe merely a *sufficient* condition of intelligibility, then it might be possible to argue that the objects of metaphysical propositions are constructed by, and comprehensible in terms of, a transcendental synthesis *other* than those of the understanding and that metaphysical propositions are therefore meaningless merely in a *restricted* and *special* sense.

On this point, however (as I have already indicated), Kant's position remains ambiguous and inconsistent. He is apparently

he just as clearly asserts that they originate in a special transcendental faculty of their own. Fortunately, however, this vacillation is irrelevant to his definition of metaphysical propositions, for whether or not their transcendental *source* is unique, they still could be differentiated from all other propositions on the basis of the uniqueness of their *object*.

unable to decide whether the concept of the unconditioned is *sui generis* and springs from a special and distinctive faculty of its own, viz. reason, or whether it is merely the result of applying the category of totality beyond the phenomenal to the noumenal world. And neither account is adequate, for each contradicts some important doctrine of the *Critique*. If, for example, the concept of the unconditioned is assumed to spring from a special transcendental faculty of its own then the table of judgments presented in the metaphysical deduction is not a complete and exhaustive list of the types of meaningful judgments (as Kant implies), and the criterion of meaningfulness can no longer be defined as reference to objects embodying one or the other of the twelve categories. On the other hand, if the concept of the unconditioned is conceived as reducible to the concept of totality, it is then difficult to see why metaphysical propositions are not meaningful in exactly the same sense in which non-metaphysical propositions are.

In the last analysis, then, Kant's rejection of metaphysics rests on his belief that metaphysical propositions lie beyond proof or disproof. And it is the cogency of the arguments supporting this claim which I now propose to examine.

II. CRITICISM OF KANT'S ARGUMENT

And first of all, I want to point out that although the word "metaphysics" has no univocal sense, Kant's definition of metaphysical propositions as propositions about unconditioned objects—using "unconditioned" in the sense he gives—is applicable to, and descriptive of, what has *usually* been understood by the phrase. By and large, most philosophers have regarded metaphysics as the science of being as such (ontology), or as the science of the character of the world as a whole (cosmology); and on either of these interpretations metaphysics would have to do with unconditioned objects.

Again, I should like to insist that if human knowledge is limited in some way, Kant's method of establishing those limits is a sound one. Since all knowledge is expressed or can be expressed in propositions, and since two of the basic properties of propositions are their intelligibility and their capacity for assuming various truth values, a definition of the limits of knowledge in terms of these two characteristics *could* be both accurate and adequate. The method,

in short, actually succeeds in furnishing a technique for distinguishing between real and pseudo propositions and between real and pseudo knowledge.

I also believe that Kant was justified in claiming that no proposition could rationally be said to be true or false if it were not congruent—through either correspondence or coherence—with perceptually given objects. Although, formally, any theory of the nature or “true” criterion of truth seems to be definitional in character—i.e. can never be proved or disproved without involving a *petitio*—to define truth in terms of congruence with perceptually given objects is to remain close to the sense in which it is, and has been, usually understood by the common man.

It is only when Kant applies this criterion to the propositions of metaphysics that his argument becomes seriously defective. To conclude that metaphysical propositions are incapable of proof or disproof because they are about objects which can never be perceptually experienced presupposes a very special theory of perceptual verification which cannot be justified and which, in fact is at variance with Kant's own arguments and conclusions elsewhere. It assumes, that is, that we have no *right* to reason from perceptual data to the existence of any object that is fundamentally different in kind from the *type* of object to be found in perception.

To take the most obvious objection first: even if we grant its underlying assumption we could not *use* the argument to any purpose unless we could (a) define precisely the type of object which *is* given perceptually and (b) establish that this is the *only* type of object that anyone ever, under any circumstances, *could* experience perceptually. Unless the first requirement is met we have no basis for defining what propositions are and what are not about perceptually given objects; and unless the second requirement is fulfilled, we have no assurance that the resulting definition will continue to apply in the future. It is true that Kant, believing as he did that he *could* and *had* discovered by the transcendental deduction just this requisite information, felt perfectly justified in inferring that metaphysical arguments *are* beyond proof-or disproof. But, despite his conviction to the contrary, the transcendental deduction gives, at best, merely *probable* truth.⁸ Hence,

⁸ cf. Ledger Wood, “The Transcendental Method,” above.

the most that he could possibly infer here is that metaphysical propositions are about objects which *probably* are never perceptually given. And the argument as a whole becomes pointless.

But aside from this purely practical difficulty, the underlying assumption of the argument is itself questionable. Even if it were true that metaphysical propositions *are* about objects which certainly never can be experienced perceptually, I fail to see on what grounds anyone could claim either that we do or do not have the right to argue to the probable existence of such objects or of their properties. Kant's one argument in this connection is to the effect that since we never experience noumenal objects as they are in themselves but only as they appear, we can never be certain as to their real nature, and therefore can never be certain as to whether the realm in which they exist is or is not open to exploration by phenomenal categories and the ordinary principles of human inference. But the conclusion to be drawn from this is not, as Kant supposed, that inference to the properties of noumenal objects *is* illegitimate; the most we can infer is that no such inference can ever be confirmed by perceptual inspection, and that we can never actually determine whether any inference to the properties of noumenal objects is or is not capable of revealing the truth about them—i.e. *is* or *is not* legitimate.

And when it is further remembered that Kant was willing to admit the possibility of a valid proof of at least certain kinds of propositions about noumenal objects—viz. that they exist and that they condition the emergence and character of phenomenal objects—his argument becomes even more confusing. For it is difficult to see why it is legitimate to permit inferences to noumenal objects in the one case but illegitimate to permit them in the other.

In other words, Kant himself has certainly failed to prove that inference to the unperceivable is an *illegitimate* type of inference. Nor, on the other hand, does he seem to have successfully proved that it is *impossible* for such an inference to take place and be known to be valid. His attempt in the *Dialectic* to prove the latter by insisting that all such inferences lead, invariably, to formal and logical difficulties is unconvincing. His own statements of the metaphysical arguments there considered are confused, and he never entertains the possibility that although these *particular* examples of inferences to noumenal objects can be proved formally

fallible, other such inferences *might* be able to escape this difficulty.

Thus, Kant himself, I believe, fails to establish either the impossibility or the illegitimacy of inferences to noumenal objects, and so fails also to establish his own version of the case against metaphysics.

III. CRITICISM OF THE KANTIAN TYPE OF ARGUMENT

The Kantian attack on metaphysics, however, is too important to dismiss with the simple rejection of Kant's statement of it, for the type of argument that Kant evolved is the archetype of arguments which have been invoked since his time—notably, by pragmatists and positivists. Accordingly, I want now to raise, in a perfectly general way, the question of the possibility of valid and trustworthy inferences to the existence of objects which, by definition, can never be experienced perceptually, for it is to this class of objects, that the objects of metaphysical propositions would, on Kant's definition, belong.⁹

To discuss this question properly, however, we must make two initial distinctions.

1. We must distinguish the assertion that such inferences are possible on the evidence of propositions about perceptible objects—or what Kant called phenomena—from the assertion that they are possible on the evidence of propositions which are *not* about perceptible objects. This distinction is important because it points up the difference between two kinds of metaphysical argument: that which proceeds from *empirical* data and that which proceeds (as in the case of Bergson) from data derived through what is claimed to be a special type of insight or intuition. But important as each type is, and however possible it may be to justify *both*, I shall limit myself here to a defense of empirically grounded metaphysics only. This is the easier course and I do not want to complicate my argument unduly.

2. When it is asserted that it is impossible to infer the existence of objects which can never be perceptually experienced, we may mean either (a) that it is impossible to prove that such inferences,

⁹ And on the view of most modern critics of metaphysics. Thus, much of what I have to say about Kant's objection to metaphysics, will apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to any objection based on the assumption that metaphysical propositions belong to the class of propositions about non-perceivable objects.

if they do occur, give trustworthy conclusions or (b) that no such inferences ever in fact occur.

And we may note with respect to meaning (a), that it eventually resolves itself into the assertion that we have no *right* to make such an inference. If such inferences *do occur*, and if they are formally valid, we could reject them *only* if we questioned the right to rely upon formal validity alone as a sufficient ground for rational belief. In other words, to assert that such inferences can never be trusted, is equivalent to claiming that although a certain proposition is the formally valid conclusion of premises whose truth has been inductively established, this fact is no reason for accepting it as true. And the question becomes, thereby, the question of just *what* principles we ought or ought not to rely upon in inference. I shall, however, refrain from discussing this version of the assertion any further here; it will be more proper to consider it below where the question of *right* is specifically raised.

The alternative meaning (b), *viz.* that inferences to objects which can never be perceptually experienced cannot in fact occur, is not so easy to understand. If it means (i) that it is *psychologically* impossible to move from an assertion about perceptible objects to an assertion about objects which can never be perceived and to *believe* at the same time that the former implies the latter, then it is obviously false: for philosophers have always in fact been making just such transitions and have always in fact been believing them to be valid inferences. Hence if the contention is to be true we must suppose, I believe, that what is really intended is (ii) that no *valid* inference from one to the other is possible, and that what the philosophers, who have made them, *thought* to be inferences are, indeed, inferences, but simply not *valid* inferences.

But *are* there any reasons for supposing that no valid inference of this sort is possible? So far as I can see, the only possible defence for such a view is that if your premises are really about perceptible objects, then your conclusion, if it is validly deduced, must be about perceptible objects also; otherwise you will have committed the fallacy of introducing a term into the conclusion which was not originally contained in one or the other of the premises.

This type of argument, however, is inconclusive, for it must assume that metaphysical inferences either *ought* to be deductive, or *must* be deductive, in form. And neither of these assumptions is

defensible. Kant's argument, for example, that metaphysics *ought* to be demonstrative because we are dissatisfied if it is less, is purely psychological in character and could only be coercive for one who, like Kant, had been trained in an extremely rationalistic tradition. Nor is it conceivable that anyone would seriously maintain that metaphysics *must* be demonstrative. For, suppose that P_1 is some proposition about perceptible objects and that it is known to be true; and suppose that P_2 is some proposition about a non-perceivable object and that it is hypothetically *assumed* to be true. Suppose also that P_1 and P_2 , when taken together, imply a third proposition, P_3 , which is like P_1 in that it is about a perceptible object, and which is found, upon inspection, to be true also. Then, on the principles of probable inference, we can clearly and validly infer that P_2 is *probably* true.¹⁰ And this would be a case of a valid, probable, inference to the existence of a non-perceivable object. It is true that in such an inference we can arrive at no ascertainable degree of probability, and that hence it fails to be coercive. But all this is beside the point. We are concerned merely with showing that formally valid inferences to the existence of non-perceivable objects, on the basis of perceptual evidence, are possible. And this is what we have done. I do not believe, therefore, that those who insist on the unverifiability of metaphysical propositions can do so on the ground that *all* inferences to metaphysical propositions are necessarily formally invalid.

It remains, however, to consider whether the formal validity of inference to non-perceivable objects, if such exist, is *sufficient* to warrant belief; whether, that is, we have the *right* to declare that it is probable that such objects exist or have such and such properties sheerly on the ground that their existence would provide a feasible explanation of facts about certain perceptible objects. What is being questioned here, of course, is the *right* to entertain and to believe, at least provisionally, metaphysical hypotheses. But, again, so far as I can see, there is no reason why this right should be denied. In the first place, as was pointed out above, the

¹⁰ The following is a familiar and typical example of such an inference: "If there is a divine intelligence which creates and sustains the world (P_2), the world will appear intelligently ordered (P_3); since intelligent beings usually act intelligently (P_1). The world does appear to be intelligently ordered. Therefore, it is probable to some degree that such a divine intelligence creates and sustains the world."

question of what does, or does not, constitute the mark of a true proposition is, from a formal point of view, a purely arbitrary matter, since no criterion of truth can be proved to be true without presupposing it in its own proof. Hence, whether we shall limit the class of true or probably true propositions to those which can be so directly verified, remains formally a matter of convention. It is no more debatable than questions about supreme principles of morals; you either embrace them or you do not, and the matter ceases to be arguable.

In the second place, moreover, if you deny this right in the case of metaphysical propositions it is difficult to see why the right should not also be denied in the case of certain scientific propositions, viz. propositions about such objects as electrons, or the other side of the moon, which, although not different in kind from perceptible objects, are nevertheless supposedly so situated that it would be *practically* impossible to verify propositions about them by inspection; for although the obstacle to direct inspection is theoretical in the one case and only practical in the other, the *formal* character of the inference is in each instance the same. Thus, to be consistent, if we deny that formal validity is sufficient ground for belief in the one case we ought to deny it in the other as well. To deny the right to science, and so curb all scientific speculation, is, naturally, possible; but I do not think that those who would deny the right to philosophy always see that this is what is involved.

To all this it will be objected, of course, that where science argues to the existence of practically uninspectable objects, it never relies *exclusively* upon formal consistency alone. Even when a proposed hypothesis is consistent with facts as they are now understood, it is not scientifically acceptable until all its consequences have been deduced and have been, without exception, perceptually verified. Thus, unlike philosophy, it will be argued, science has a means of confirming belief in an hypothesis which is different from, and additional to, the confirmation that belief receives simply in providing a plausible explanation of facts to be explained.

But the plausibility of this type of objection rests, I suspect, on a very elementary logical confusion. Those who offer it, argue as if hypotheses can, in and of themselves, give rise to implications or consequences. And it is only by making this assumption that they

can so easily and cheaply prove metaphysical propositions to be unverifiable. The procedure (all too familiar!) is to produce a metaphysical proposition such as "The world is organic," rhetorically demand that its consequences be exhibited, and then, if the challenge is not at once met, to conclude that metaphysics lies beyond verification. But the fact of the matter is that *no* hypothesis (metaphysical *or* scientific) has consequences unless it is taken in conjunction with some *other* proposition which is relevant and which is already believed to be true or probable. And when thus coupled with empirical generalization there is certainly no *a priori* reason why metaphysics, just as science, should not possess consequences admitting appeal to empirical data. The fact that philosophers have often failed to exhibit such consequences for their systems (and this, I think, is the exception rather than the rule) is beside the point; the point is that those who would deny the possibility to philosophy have failed to show why what they thus claim to be true is necessarily the case.

To summarize, then, this long argument: I can see no *formal* or *logical* difficulty in asserting the possibility of valid and dependable inferences from propositions about perceptible to propositions about non-perceptible objects; for, as I have tried to show, (a) it is possible for formally valid inferences from empirical premises to metaphysical conclusions to take place; (b) it is formally justifiable (if anyone choose to do so) to accept mere logical consistency as a sufficient ground for belief; (c) there is no formal difference between inferences to practically uninspectable objects and inferences to theoretically uninspectable objects; and, finally, (d) there is no formal reason why propositions about theoretically uninspectable objects might not be verifiable by inspectable consequences. In other words, there appears to be nothing logically incompatible in the notion of assigning truth values to metaphysical propositions by methods acceptable to science.

And this is significant. For it means that if we deny that metaphysical propositions have this capacity we must resort eventually to material or non-formal reasons to prove our case. We must, that is, appeal to some known fact about the actual world which indicates that metaphysical propositions are defective in this respect. And there are no such facts. It is true, as Whitehead has shown, that science *assumes* a cosmology entailing a rigorous scepticism as

one of its results but the assumption itself is metaphysical and the facts that science has uncovered in its support admit of a different and less positivistic interpretation. In the last analysis, therefore, the positivist can prove his case only by stepping outside the realm of facts altogether and appealing in the end to assertions which are themselves metaphysical in character.

It is just this hard truth, I suspect, that has led many anti-metaphysical philosophers in recent years to shift their attack, and to deny value to metaphysics on the ground that it is meaningless—a ground which Kant himself was the first to suggest but which he failed, as we have already noted, to develop to any extent. And it is this type of objection which I now want to examine briefly before concluding.

Although in recent years considerable philosophic discussion has been devoted to the problem of the nature of meaning and to the examination of the meaningfulness of metaphysical propositions, there is, relative to the amount of energy expended, little improvement in our understanding of these matters. We are ignorant not only of the specific nature of meaning but also even of the order of facts to which it belongs—i.e. whether it is *adjectival*, *relational* or *operational* in character. And until some more definite evidence is forthcoming on these more general problems, it scarcely seems profitable, or even interesting, to speculate whether metaphysical propositions, in particular, are or are not meaningful. For this reason, and also for the reason that I feel a special incompetence in the field, I shall limit myself here to the expression of one or two purely tentative opinions.

And first of all, I should like to point out that if with Kant we define metaphysical propositions as propositions about unconditioned objects, we can, to repeat what I suggested earlier, insist that they are meaningless only if we also assume (a) that all knowledge is derived from ordinary sense experience and (b) that no sense experience can give rise to the notion of the "unconditioned." Otherwise, propositions about unconditioned objects would be propositions about objects which have been given to us in experience or, at the very least, about objects having a property which is an experienceable property of given objects. And if this were indeed the case, it would be difficult to see why propositions

about a *chair*, or, at the most fanciful extreme, propositions about a *unicorn*, would be meaningful while propositions about an unconditioned object would be meaningless; for all three would be about experienceable objects or experienceable properties. Yet it is not easy to establish the truth or falsity of either of the above assumptions.

For example, the thesis that all knowledge is derived from sense perception appears plausible to us, I suspect, *only* because of the great difficulty of framing an alternative hypothesis which is equally intelligible. Philosophers in the past have worked out what in effect are alternative accounts of the genesis of knowledge; to this class belong Plato's theory of reminiscence, Descartes' theory that God directly implants certain concepts in our mind (e.g. the idea of perfection) and the view held by various mystics that it is possible to transcend ordinary ways of knowing through intuition. But none of these accounts have ever been clearly formulated and for none of them has there been sufficient evidence to sustain conviction for any considerable period of time. And the upshot of the matter has been that most of us have come to believe that the empiricistic account of the origin of knowledge—with all the difficulties in it which have come to light during its long history—is closer to the truth.

On the other hand, these difficulties are very real ones. For one thing, no clear and finally coercive account of just how we derive concepts from the sensibly and particularly given has ever been suggested. The usual and familiar appeal to the fact of generalization is scarcely more than a verbal refuge; for, aside from the fact that it is still not clear as to exactly what generalization as a process involves, there are certain concepts whose genesis it is most difficult to explain in this manner. The characteristics denoted by such concepts as *perfection*, *equi-probability* and even *cause* are not themselves given properties of perceptual objects, nor is it easy to show how they can be defined in terms of a property or properties which have been so given.

More than this, although those who have rejected the empiricistic theory have not been successful in framing an alternative theory just as convincing, the simple fact that they *did* reject it is a fact which ought to be given weight. It is conceivable, of course, that their rejection grew out of the mere failure to understand what we

have latterly come to see clearly; but in view of their indisputable eminence as philosophers and of the acuteness of their reasoning in other matters, it behooves us, I believe, to proceed cautiously in labelling as utterly false what they found it necessary to affirm.

With respect to the second assumption—that no unconditioned object is ever given in sensible experience—this, it seems to me, is also still a debatable matter. For behind it there certainly lies the assumption, which Kant regarded as justifiable, that we can know exhaustively, exactly, and beyond a reasonable degree of doubt, just what properties any sensibly given object can or cannot have. Yet that we actually do or do not have such information seems to be extremely difficult to prove, and up to the present time, at least, not proved at all.

This leads to the second point I want to make here. Until such time as we have acquired further and more accurate information about the nature and genesis of meaning itself, we should either give over entirely all efforts to determine whether metaphysical propositions, as a special class, are meaningful or not, or, if the question must be raised, endeavor to answer it in terms of the rough and ready standard by which men *ordinarily* determine whether they are talking nonsense, and *not* in terms of some privately embraced theory of the nature of meaning. To suggest this as a provisional alternative is not, of course, equivalent to assuming that the opinion and practice of the majority are in all cases correct. It merely assumes that unless there is some strong and compelling reason for suspecting it to be wrong it is sensible to proceed as if the common opinion were true.

And it seems to me that the criterion of intelligibility which men actually and normally employ is one which admits that at least *some* of the propositions about unconditional objects are meaningful; for that criterion is, I believe, the criterion of *communicability*. If when, in a universe of symbols with which my auditor is otherwise familiar, I utter a sentence or make some non-vocal gesture, and the symbols used symbolize for him what they symbolize for me, then I say that the proposition which they express is meaningful, and if they do *not* symbolize for him what they symbolize for me then the proposition which they express is *not* meaningful. And it seems to me that propositions about God and about the world as

a whole—that is, propositions about unconditioned objects—survive this test.

To this, of course, there is the familiar objection that we have no way of testing whether my auditor does or does not really understand my symbols in the same sense as I do, unless what we are talking about can actually be denoted or pointed out physically, and that since metaphysics deals with the undenotable, the intelligibility of its propositions cannot be tested and so must remain forever suspect. Scrutiny of this type of argument, however, reveals two serious difficulties. In the first place, if we take it seriously, we should, as Professor Stace shows,¹¹ be compelled to deny meaning to propositions about other minds, because other minds and their contents are physically undenotable not only by me but even by that other mind itself. And this in itself constitutes a serious objection, for there certainly exist propositions about other minds which appear indubitably meaningful, and this fact, in turn suggests that we have some means of testing communicability other than that of direct denotation. Without developing the notion any further, I suggest that such a test may be found in analogy, where we can make clear what the undenotable meaning of some concept is by pointing out its analogies, both positive and negative, to other concepts which *do* have a denotable reference. In other words, we can test the communicability of some symbol by trying to discover a similarity of structure, both internal and external between it and some concept which *is* overtly denotable.

In the second place, however (and more importantly), I think that the argument when applied in the case of metaphysics begs the question. It can conclude that propositions about unconditional objects *cannot* be tested for communicability only if it is previously supposed that unconditioned objects are never actually given in the physical world and that the property "being unconditioned" cannot be reduced without remainder to elements which *are* given in the physical world. And this, as I have already indicated is still a debatable issue.

In short, I am not convinced that there is any more reason for supposing that metaphysical propositions are meaningless than there is for supposing that they are unverifiable. On the contrary,

¹¹ W. T. Stace, "Metaphysics and Meaning," *Mind*, Vol. XLIV, N.S., No. 176.

no philosopher can ever actually avoid framing metaphysical propositions and in fact believing them to be true. There can, for example, be no reasoning about matters of fact and no assurance that such reasoning gives even *probable* truth, without supposing that nature is in some sense uniform. And the latter, I submit, is a proposition about an unconditioned object. Thus it is that those who on *rational* grounds attempt to prove either that metaphysical propositions are meaningless or that they are unverifiable, are really, in effect, committed to assuming the falsity of what they set out to prove.

But that so many contemporary philosophers forget this, should not, I suppose, be a matter for wonder. In periods which have witnessed the disruption of great systems, philosophy develops marked suicidal tendencies. Discouraged and appalled at the prospect of having to build anew, philosophers will often then attempt to escape their responsibility by unconsciously identifying the particular philosophy they have just found inadequate with philosophy in general, and by assuming uncritically that henceforth philosophy, as such, must be banished from the congregation of the human sciences. Kant's age and our own offer no exception to this rule. Kant was confronted with the bankruptcy of two great systems: the empirical tradition in Hume and the rationalistic tradition in Christian Wolff. We ourselves have just witnessed the dissolution of a latter day Hegelianism into cosmic metaphors and rarefied sentiments about human personality. And both Kant and we have reacted alike in taking counsel with despair.

But whether our own positivistic tendencies will survive for a longer period than those inherent in Kantianism did, no one can say. I can merely venture the opinion that the attempt to reject metaphysics as untrustworthy will probably fail now just as it always has failed. For metaphysics seems to be the natural product of two quite diverse but widely recurrent types of human temperament, the mystical and the rational: those who are emotionally sensitive to the mystery of sheer existence; and those who are logically sensitive to the need for first principles. Both seek what Kant has identified as the unique end of the metaphysical quest and what he most aptly called "the unconditioned." The mystic searches for that being which is at once self-determined and the determiner of all else that is; the rationalist seeks for that

proposition or set of propositions which are absolutely true and from which all other true propositions may be deductively derived; and neither can be satisfied with less. Thus even if men should eventually be able to show—as I doubt they can—that metaphysical propositions are beyond our capacity to prove or to comprehend, so long as individuals with such temperaments are born, so long shall we have metaphysicians and metaphysics.

V I I

SOME BAD RESULTS OF KANT'S THOUGHT

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SOME BAD RESULTS OF KANT'S THOUGHT

LET it be made clear at once that when the following pages attribute a view to Kant, they are speaking not necessarily with historical precision, but in respect of Kant as hitherto often understood. The reason for this otherwise unjustifiable course is that our concern in this article is to judge of Kant's influence on modern thought and to point out certain ways in which it is good or bad. Kant's influence over later philosophers, turning their thoughts upon this problem rather than that, suggesting one conclusion rather than another, is one thing, and a very important thing; what Kant really believed or opined may be, and doubtless in some instances is, a quite different thing. The latter question is one of historical evidence, nice textual analysis, and the like; and its significance need not be belittled; for without some degree of it at least, there would be no history of philosophy at all. But a thinker's influence by no means always runs precisely in the grooves of his actual views: his contemporaries and successors may misunderstand those views, and yet the misunderstandings may direct the prevailing current of thought. And when we attempt, as we are about to do, to evaluate something of the influence which Kant has had and still has upon philosophical thought, it is surely more proper to follow hitherto prevalent interpretations than to ask if those interpretations accurately correspond to his views. One may say, if he likes, that the criticisms which will here be made are not criticisms of Kant but of certain misunderstandings of Kant. This may be admitted: but it seems to be of greater immediate value for the problems of philosophy to show up certain merits and defects that have actually followed in the wake of the reading of Kant by his contemporaries and successors.

The purpose of the criticism of the Critical Philosophy here offered is, then, to point out certain ideas, which were suggested by their reading of Kant to later philosophers, which are helpful or harmful to the progress of philosophy. And the present writer believes that at the present date that progress will best be served by the selection of certain harmful ideas; for there are, it will be urged,

in our Kantian inheritance some ideas that come under this head. Kant's influence as a whole may have been more for good than for ill: no balance of these is here sought. Let the course of the argument serve only to turn the attention of present-day thinkers to certain points, usually considered part of Kant's system, that have exercised and are today exercising a malign influence.

There is an additional need of this sort of criticism, in view of the tendency of every age to believe that it stands at the peak of progress. So, to many, the whole modern period of philosophy is in advance of the medieval, the medieval in advance of the Greek, and so on. Now doubtless the modern period since Descartes has discovered many things that were before unknown; but it does not follow that it may not have forgotten certain things, or that it may not have at some points turned backward instead of forward. There is, perhaps, no necessary law of progress; progress in thought as in morals and other fields is conditioned by incessant endeavor, and endeavor is always liable to misdirection and slackening. We do not wish to be provincial in the geographical sense, and we travel to foreign countries to prevent that; but there is a historical provincialism which is quite as stultifying, and more insidious, which leads us to believe that modern points of view are presumably superior to those preceding them. Let us not hesitate to assert, if evidence points that way, that certain tendencies of the last century or two which seem to be interwoven with the very life of our thinking, may be retrogressive.

In respect to Kant, whose influence today is seen in so many ways—particularly in the preoccupation of philosophy with questions of the validity of knowledge, of the nature of scientific method and the structure of thought—there is the more reason to consider the question, since at least two important trends of contemporary thought seem definitely to repudiate the general “critical” tradition. These two trends are: on the one hand the essentially modern type comprising “temporalism,” emergent evolution, instrumentalism, and other forms of process-philosophy, and on the other hand scholasticism. These powerful currents of thought do not seem to admit that an investigation of the nature of knowledge is a prerequisite of all philosophy. They do indeed provide an epistemology; but they do not—to put it in very general terms—seem to think that we cannot know until we know how to know, or that

if we do learn what is the proper structure of knowledge, we can conclude therefrom to the nature of the external world. Now Kant, it has usually been supposed, did believe both of these things; and many thinkers of today seem to follow him. Here then is an issue raised, with the discussion of which we may well begin our estimate of Kant's influence. It will be urged that the "critical" method introduces into philosophy an introversion which is as injurious and misleading in respect to the acquisition of knowledge as introversion in respect to action.

If one is to ascertain the proper nature of knowledge, he must have an instance of knowledge before him: no one would claim that its nature could be deduced *ex nihilo*. And so it was with Kant: he had to have something already before him which was genuine knowledge. He assumed that physics and mathematics were such. (We now abstract of course from his view of things in themselves.) He did not prove this: he took it as true, following a more or less natural but (in his sense) uncritical bias. And having assumed that physical science was the type of genuine knowledge, he was bound to find that any knowledge that did not conform to the conditions of physical science was to that extent mere pretense. The conditions were, of course, sense-perception (*Anscheinung*) and systematizing of its deliverances by mind in accordance with the twelve categories. In all the knowledge vouchsafed to us by the physical sciences, sense-perception undoubtedly furnishes the material, and that material is objective and external to one's experience just in so far as it conforms to the categories of quantity, quality, causality, etc. And since the categories were, in their orderly and systematic character, but the manifestation of mind—then naturally mind constitutes objective reality. Mind here is of course not one's individual self but the universal orderliness, exhibited in the categories, of which your or my thinking is more or less an example. And the result is that for the theoretical faculty at least, there is no knowledge apart from sense-perception, and that metaphysics, dealing with the existence of such non-perceivable beings as the soul, God, or the universe as a whole, is from a purely theoretical point of view, baseless. If, as Kant in the second *Critique* urged, such entities are to be acknowledged as involved in the moral values, nevertheless there is for theoretical reason a gulf fixed between such valuation and cognition as used in the sciences.

It remained for Fichte to attempt to close the gulf by reducing the latter to the former; with what success it is now irrelevant to inquire. Certainly Kant restricted knowledge of fact in the ontological or speculative sense to the phenomena revealed by *Anschauung* and stamped with the categorial system.

Now this result depended on the fact that Kant dogmatically assumed that science actually contains knowledge. But on theoretical grounds there does not appear to be any way of deciding what shall be the norm of knowledge. Criticism starts from a dogmatic basis.

It is true that all common-sense people agree that we do have genuine knowledge of the external world in space and time, and that the physical sciences are at least part of the body of this knowledge. It is not that we disagree with Kant's assumed basis: we only point out that criticism uses the method of assuming knowledge to be of a certain sort. It is the method that we should oppose; it is the method that has had injurious results upon subsequent philosophy; that "critical" method which perhaps was dearest of all his attitudes to Kant himself. For the method implies or suggests that knowing has a peculiar nature of its own, independent of that which is known; that that nature is the norm which tests the truth or falsity of assertions. By independent is here meant, not that there need be no object of knowledge, but that the particular character of that object—e.g., its complex of sense-qualities—does not affect the essential structure of the knowing. That structure is self-determined (systematic categorizing) and therefore there can be deduced beforehand the general structure of the real world. For if the very nature of knowing determines those categories, then the object of knowledge must conform to them. Now the result of such a claim is that the philosopher's interest in the concrete detail of the external world must lapse. Since he knows already that that world is subject to the categories of quantity, quality, causality, substance, and modality, it does not matter to him what quantitative relations hold within the world, what is the list of qualities (tone, pitch, color, temperature, etc.) or what is the cause of what. Infalibly he will lose interest in the specific make-up of the world about him. Infalibly he will no longer, as philosopher, follow the discoveries of the physical sciences. Thus there will be for him a gulf between

the *a priori* forms and the empirically ascertained contents of those forms; a gulf to which he confesses, in his indifference to the discoveries aforesaid. Had it not been that he ascribed to the *a priori* forms of knowledge a superiority, that is an independence, which gives them a power to maintain themselves in all knowledge, he would never have adopted this attitude of indifference. But such a result is deplorable: not only is it liable to error if the results of the sciences (upon which, be it noted, his whole theory of knowledge is based) should turn out to give the lie to his list of categories; but it also condemns philosophy to an abstract, and therefore narrow, point of view. It tends to lose respect for admitted fact, to become an isolated discipline, claiming all fundamental truth for itself and holding the special sciences in a carefully veiled contempt—humanly speaking most unfortunate in that it provokes mutual indifference between philosopher and scientist.

This claim of *a priori* deducibility and therefore *a priori* validity leads however to positive errors. Kant, as is well known, did not deduce the particular twelve categories; but on Kant's principles the deduction should have been at least attempted. Fichte, who for a time if not throughout his whole life regarded himself as the defender of Kant's system in its inner meaning, attempted such a deduction, but did not carry it out into any considerable detail, since he had no great interest in external nature. Schelling carried it further; but it was reserved for Hegel to carry out the deduction into the many particular categories of the real world (those of mechanism, chemism, and life as well as those of humanity, such as morality, art, law, religion, and so on). Now it is doubtless true that Hegel—who had scant respect for the Kantian claim to criticize knowledge by means of knowledge—meant to be a thoroughly objective thinker. Hegel's first category is being, and all the later categories are conceived by him to be the unfolding of the nature of being. Nevertheless it was Hegel's deepest conviction that being is in the last analysis rational; and since reason is system and order, he was bound to discover a system of interdependent categories in the real world. That these categories are not in the Kantian sense due to the interpretation of an external reality by mind, is of course Hegel's own view; for Hegel the categories are there, in reality itself, which is mind; in the end, to

be sure, one absolute mind. Yet the ghost of Kant's *a priori* deducible forms of thought hovers before Hegel's vision when he believes that reality must always conform to the triadic type of thesis-antithesis-synthesis. Not that we would declare this result to be quite false; on the contrary, we believe it to be in a large sense true. But the point is that no man can tell beforehand in what specific form its truth will appear. We may be sure (let us grant) that reality will be orderly; but inasmuch as order is nothing apart from the things that are ordered, that order cannot by us be laid down in advance of the knowledge of the detail of the things. Our method must never be deductive, but must be inductive. As Hegel was a thinker of great insight, he often perceived significant details that verified the triadic scheme; yet it is generally admitted that when it came to the content of the natural sciences he went astray. And the result was a twofold evil: first, the scientists, taking this apriorism as typical of philosophy, misunderstood the latter's aim and conceived themselves to possess a higher type of knowledge, and second, the philosophers, fearing to make mistakes and to be shamed by correction at the hands of scientists, betook themselves to the defense of truths so general as to have no specific bearing upon the make-up of the actual world—or else abandoned metaphysics in favor of epistemology. Examples of such abstract philosophizing are modern idealistic systems like those of Bosanquet and Bradley; of the abandonment of metaphysics, the majority of modern investigations (whose name is legion) into the nature of thought. Be it noted that we do not hereby condemn those systems as false, or those investigations as fruitless; we say only that they fail to give us any well verified outline of the order of the real world. And all this is due to the influence of the supposed Kantian view that mind legislates to nature.

If nature as a whole is mind, this must be shown by investigation of nature, as well as of mind.

This rather old criticism, still valid today, is of course a defense of empiricism in metaphysics; but the word has been badly misunderstood by the idealists. For Kant, the sense-data gain their objectivity from their systematization by mind; in themselves they are as unreal as the scholastic primary matter which has no existence by itself. Connection, relation, and order are thus thought of in the Kantian tradition as due to the activity of mind; bare

content apart from its relations to other content, as embodying the empirical element of our knowledge. True, Kant did not go so far as to say that all relation is the work of mind; he limited the work of mind to such relating activity as is involved in the categories. But Fichte extended the area of that activity, and Hegel made it quite all-inclusive. The consequence is that modern idealism usually understands by empiricism, the observation of unrelated data, purely immediate, quite undefined. Admitting such data as necessary elements of the truth, it nevertheless admits them in so denatured a state that they can have no specific truth to offer. This result is seen, for instance, in Royce's treatment of mysticism¹ where he declares that the mystic, confined to pure immediacy with no relational attributes, is the only true empiricist. Now such extreme procedure savors of the methods of Procrustes. It defines what it condemns in such a way that condemnation must follow. With the list of categories already prepared, the blind data serve as mere filling of the network and from them no particular new knowledge can be gained. The specific results of biology, physics, psychology and other sciences become indifferent to the grand outline; and again philosophy becomes that abstract subject which led to the failures of Hegel in the Philosophy of Nature. Many thinkers feel today that philosophy should make more use than it has done of the empirical method; but the Kantian tradition has closed off that method by its definition of empiricism. As a matter of fact, the categories of nature, or mind, or beauty, or morality, cannot possibly be deduced *a priori*: they are to be discovered by investigation of the worlds of nature, the human mind, and actual works of art and deeds of men. Empiricism does not mean the absurd method of attending only to the indescribable immediate: it means docility, getting knowledge by trial and error, as including sense-data and thought but always verifying the general principle in the particular instance. It does not declare that there are no universally valid principles; but it does insist that they must be illustrated in the concrete and that otherwise they are open to suspicion.

The above criticism is not new, having often been levelled at idealists; though in spite of it, not many modern philosophers have

¹ *The World and the Individual* (New York, 1927), Vol. I, Chap. iv.

been willing to work at a properly empirical metaphysics. But we must now go deeper, and lay bare the source of the Kantian delinquency. The thesis to be defended is this: it would not have been possible for Kant to suggest that mind constitutes reality, had not an altogether false notion of reality been introduced by Descartes. It was such a false notion that turned the attention of philosophers then, and even until now, inward instead of outward, and brought on that introverted attitude of which we spoke above. This introversion, had it occurred in the sphere of practical life, would have resulted in egomania; in the sphere of theoretical philosophy it is practically harmless, but tends to make and too often does make of philosophy a diversion or game without serious consequences.

The statement just made sounds so extreme that some elucidation must precede the defense of the thesis. We say that philosophy has too often become a playful diversion, because as frequently, or even usually, pursued today it has no penalty for wrong solutions. It is not in human nature to take seriously a problem about the real world whose solution has no consequences for the rest of life. It is well to emphasize the love of truth for its own sake; but why is this better than the love of solving crossword puzzles? No doubt we all believe it is better because we live by the former but not (as a rule) by the latter. It is true that any sport may become earnest enough—rivalry, a good performance, or reputation may be strong motives. Children too, as Schopenhauer said, take their games seriously. But philosophy, treating of the real in large outline, summing up the order of reality, fixes one's place in the scheme and cannot be irrelevant to the underlying ends of one's conduct. Here there can be no final divorce between theory and practice. If one's idealism, or pluralism, or materialism has no effect on his conduct, then he does not believe in his philosophy; for belief is both theoretical and practical. In that case, his philosophy is but the attempt to solve an extraordinarily tantalizing puzzle, and he must be rated a little lower than the other puzzlers. For the modern thinkers who investigate the nature of investigation—witness the number of articles and books on the nature of proof, of truth, of scientific method, of analysis—do not solve their puzzles as often as do the devotees of the crossword. There is in fact no more of established result in such matters than in metaphysics itself. But

the metaphysician has at least the excuse that he is dealing with things of ultimate importance. If he has reached no final solution of his problems, neither has the statesman of his; yet we respect the latter, and should the former, as being occupied with matters of grave concern.

Now the present thesis is that this turning of philosophy into a major sport for "intellectuals"—a rather common phenomenon today—was due to a root-error of Descartes, perpetuated and strengthened by Kant.

The root-error was, to define, or what amounts to the same thing, to find the criterion of, reality in terms of cognition alone. Now of course reality, so far as it can be defined at all, can be defined only in its relation to the observer of it: there is no other category left. But as we shall soon urge, that relation is twofold: it is both of knowledge and of action. Descartes' initial mistake was to take one of these and exclude the other. And it has on the whole seemed obvious, through the modern period, that the criterion of reality must be solely of a theoretical sort. Now and then a vigorous protest was made, as by Fichte in one way and by the pragmatist of today in another; but these protests have more or less gone to the other extreme and defined the real in exclusively practical terms, whereas reality cannot be properly defined without reference to both the knowing and the acting of the observer.

So far as can be judged, all higher animals, including man, have not only some sort of awareness of their environment, but also act upon the objects in it. Feelings and emotions, if present, belong to the inner or subjective side; the objective categories, in which animals and men have transactions with reality, are knowledge (of various grades) and action (also of various grades). Reality then for us and probably for all higher animals must be defined as object alike of knowledge and of action.

Now every conscious animal soon learns by experience that it cannot do everything it wants to do. In animals below the level of man this limitation may or may not rise into clear consciousness, though it is obviously a fact; in man it does without doubt continually emerge into clear consciousness. Men know that they cannot always do what they want; they act upon objects (throw stones, fell trees, kill dangerous animals) but their action is limited. And it soon becomes evident that the limitation of action comes from

the object itself. Men cannot throw all stones, but only those which are not too heavy; they can fell trees but not boulders; they can easily kill certain small animals, but not so easily certain larger ones. It is this limitation of their own powers that engenders in men, and, no doubt so far as they are distinctly conscious, in animals, the sense of reality. Reality naturally means that element in these objects upon which or with which men act, which controls the acts they perform, compels men to take account of the objects, to respect their qualities, in brief to adapt their actions to those qualities. Thus reality is in actual experience a compelling practical category.

But reality is more than that: no practice without theory. If men learn that they cannot always do what they want, but must adapt themselves to the object, the very learning consists already in at least some knowledge of the character of the object. The stone is very heavy, too heavy to throw; the tree resists the muscles that would hurl it; the rocks stand firm against the push of one's arms, and the animal escapes or rends the hunter. These are matters of observation; attempted action reveals them, but they are seen not by the arms or legs but by the quiescent eye or ear or sense of touch, and registered by the intellect whose activity is only that of attention; and the mental aspect of attention, so far as distinct from the accompanying muscular effort, has a large component of passivity. Thus the sense of reality, aroused by attempted action and perhaps by nothing else, reveals that which is to be observed and thought about. The object of action is at once also the object of cognition: the relation to action signifies its external reality and the relation to cognition, of sense or intellect, furnishes its content and nature. Reality is thus a twofold category: it is that whose independent power is shown by our attempted action, and whose nature, to which we must adapt ourselves, is given to observation.

Note that it is already involved in this definition of reality, as at once practical and theoretical, that the object is independent of, and external to or quite other than, the actor and observer. The object is independent because it opposes (or sometimes adds a greater strength to) the endeavors of the acting subject. Thereby it is other than the actor, and has a nature of its own; for a thing cannot oppose itself. And if it has a nature of its own, which requires docility or passive attention on the part of the actor, then

it is antecedently real. The very assumption which the observer makes in the process of observing is that the object is something in itself and apart from him: he is docile and receptive, and his wishes are not dominant, but subject to disappointment or fulfilment when he pays regard to the object. If the note of independence is given by the practical side, the note of essence or nature or character is given by the cognitive aspect, and either would be meaningless without the other. Independence means having a character in the object which we must always in some degree fail to control—but we shall never be aware of such a character without thoughtful observation.

In action, and even in the strong desire which is attempted action, we find the keynote of externality; for in that state of concentrated striving there is typically neither awareness of self nor idea: there is, for our experience, the object only with which we are concerned. The subjective predicament, of which so much has been made in certain recent epistemological criticism, does not here exist at all. Mind transcends itself—a peculiarity of mind, which body does not possess; but the transcendence is not primarily a cognitive, but a practical category. Indeed, this is a matter of daily experience with those engaged in practical and difficult tasks; with the theorist, such experience is relatively vanishing, and consequently he fails to reckon with it in his philosophy. For most men who live surrounded by the pads and cushions of civilized life, it needs sudden danger to life or limb to provide a realizing sense of this self-transcendence of intense desire. A Berkeley has quite overlooked this side of life: a Kant who did not overlook it would not have had to purchase objectivity by the bestowal of the system of categories upon the otherwise subjective contents of sense. In action there is a minimum of idea and a maximum of object acted upon and object desired: in thought, there is a maximum of idea and a minimum of object.

If this is so, then the criterion of the reality of any thought, or sense-datum, or other content, in the widest sense of the term, is this: does it in any way alter the direction of our activity? But activity is a vague term and the question at once arises: activity of what sort? For thinking is partly activity, as well as bodily movement; and any object thought of alters the direction of thinking, while yet the object may be imaginary or illusory.

Let it be said at once, then, that by activity is here meant the pursuit of some good other than truth. The reason is at once obvious. The criterion of reality cannot be that which has to be accepted in order that we may reach the truth; for the truth already means knowledge of reality; plainly a circle. Ultimately there can be no theoretical criterion. There may be certain ultimate truths so clearly self-evident as to appear to be their own guarantee; e.g., the principles of identity, contradiction, sufficient reason, and causality. The present argument is not concerned with these ultimate truths. It is enough to point out that they cannot work without some real objects to work upon. Our present concern is with the criterion of the reality of such objects.

For those who take the purely theoretical point of view, the evidence of external reality is usually supposed to be in sense-data. But the question now arises, what is the guarantee of the reality of sense-objects? Some would here rest, and declare that we can go no further. They may declare that there must be an ultimate $\piούστω$, whose reality is obvious in and of itself, on which all other truth depends, and from which all criteria are to be drawn. But then the question of choice arises: why sense rather than imagination? Admitting that somewhere there must be ultimate $\piούστω$, we must have some reason for preferring one to another. Sense-data then need a guarantee. But that guarantee lies in the fact that we have to respect the sense-data, and the principles drawn by thought from them, simply and solely because those data and principles have to be accepted or believed in order to the attainment of the goods we need must pursue or the prevention of the ills we would avoid.

Indeed there is nothing more obvious than this. Sense-data and the meanings which they convey to reflective thought do most certainly inform us of what we must believe when we try to get what we want. If I want to cross a river, I must adapt my action to the sense-observed sinking of certain bodies in water, and either swim or take boat or build a bridge across the water. If I want to eat, I must "realize," as the expressive saying is, that wood and stones cannot be digested, but certain other things can be digested. And so on. It is because each man learns for himself that in practice sense-data serve to indicate what conditions his acts must conform to, that he takes such data as marks of the real. He does not

find that those objects which are not involved in sense-data need to be taken into account in his pursuit of the goods of life. True, there are many goods of life, from eating and drinking up to the loftiest moral ideals; but the most elementary, those without which, on this terrestrial globe, we cannot even possess the power of entertaining the other and perhaps higher ideals, are the goods for the obtaining of which it is absolutely necessary to accept the reality of the sense-world.

Or if one denies that these sense-objects must really be respected in our attainment of the higher goods, he is only denying that the former are real. The Oriental ascetic or mystic, the Schopenhauerian repudiator of the will to live, registers by his very repudiation his belief that these external conditions are illusory. His criterion of reality is the same as ours; it is the particular real that differs. All agree in showing by their conduct that the real is that which matters; it is that to which we must adapt our action if we would gain the goods we crave, even though men may differ widely in their definition of those goods.

If the above account seems to have laid too exclusive a stress on the practical aspect, that is only because (as will soon appear) modern philosophy has considered the theoretical aspect alone, and needs to be corrected by a strong emphasis the other way. But the thesis here advocated finds both aspects equally necessary. The real is object—to which we have to pay regard in our acts—that is the practical aspect; but this alone is contentless, since it is only by observation and reflection, which are cognitive, that we learn to what we must pay regard. Reality means nothing unless it has a fairly definite content; content has no being unless it has practical force. If the practical aspect is neglected, we are landed in a one-sided intellectualism; if the theoretical aspect is neglected, we are committed to a pragmatism or instrumentalism without objective guidance and therefore in the end suicidal. Neither side can work without the other.

If this is what reality means, then any attempt to find a wholly logical criterion of what is real, is fundamentally wrong-headed; it plays a game of which the best we can say is that like the study of logic it affords good practice in preparation for the important problems. The trouble is that the practitioners seldom do more than keep up their practising. Or perhaps it would be more gen-

erous to say that the various systems of modern thought that have followed solely the logical clue have constructed objects of high aesthetic quality, with the detached attitude of the artist. But in any case, so long as the most beautiful and coherent system of metaphysics in the world cannot be shown to impose its constraint on the practice of man, it can claim no serious respect as philosophy; the note of reality is lacking.

Obviously this amounts to saying that philosophy is, or is a part of, religion. Religion is practical in intent; when, as in the modern period, it became for many quite divorced from philosophy and philosophy went over to science, there was grave danger that philosophy would lose its all-important place. That danger does not threaten the scientist, for he deals with physical things and persons, whose reality is daily attested in practice. But it did and does beguile philosophy with the playing of a game in which even the rules are not clearly known.

See now how it happened that the modern period took the wrong turning. It was because it took the subjective direction. Descartes turned the rudder that way, and Kant lashed the wheel. For the subjective direction was bound to miss the clue to reality; that clue lies in the compulsion of the object upon action.

When Descartes sought for an absolutely certain knowledge, he did so through the subjective road. He set out to examine the nature of thinking. Now thinking has two sides or aspects; the subjective which we call the thinking process (or function, or state), and the objective which is the object thought of. Neither of these is ever found without the other, as far as our experience goes. Consequently Descartes might have adopted either of two procedures. He might have asked, what characteristics must the object possess in order to be real? Or he might have asked, what is involved in the thinking process or subjective side in which we cannot help believing? He took the latter alternative; and therewith the current of modern thought turned in the subjective direction. This means that the guarantee of reality was sought, then and up till now, in the nature of the thinking process itself as distinct from the nature of the object. Descartes found the guarantee, he believed, in clearness and distinctness. It seemed a new road to truth; modern philosophy has not yet grown tired of exploiting it, even though now and again a quite objective system like that of

Spinoza or Leibniz, or a materialistic trend as seen in Hobbes, Gassendi, and others, was bound to show itself. But the point is that when Descartes chose the subjective road, he thereby neglected the objective clue which enables us to test the reality of our object; viz. the relation of that object not to our intellect but to our will. As was stated above, it is the practical relation that signifies the external being of a content. But Descartes concentrated his attention upon the thinking as mere thinking and nothing else. Henceforth the norms of thinking—or what seem to us to be the norms—must be the criterion of what is real. Given some material to work upon—and sense-data are the obviously handy material—then the norms of thinking applied to these sense-data will give the real world. It was not, indeed, until Kant gave an orderly list of those norms, that the work begun by Descartes began to issue into a characteristically modern philosophical system; and it was not until Hegel gave his fully rounded list of categories that the work assumed the aspect of a complete system; but the seeds lay in Descartes, and the system of absolute idealism was but the fully grown tree. Meanwhile, thinking was understood gradually in a larger aspect—else indeed it could not have aspired to constitute objective reality. Starting in Descartes as the private psychological process of a single conscious person, it grew into the transcendental Ego of Kant—shedding its sheath of personal psychical process in order to do so—and finally into the Absolute Idea of Hegel.

For Hegel, indeed, thought was no subjective affair; and so far Hegel's independence of Kant is clear. Nevertheless the taint of the detached play-attitude did remain: no Hegelian has ever claimed that the Absolute Idea makes a difference in one's specific conduct. And no one therefore has ever verified its presence by having to change his action to accord with it. At least, according to the logic of absolute idealism, he could not do so, since whatever he does, the Absolute Idea is always present, and system remains eternally real. If the Absolute Idea permitted that some kinds of conduct put one outside the system, there would have been a penalty consequent upon error, and the Absolute would have been found practically verifiable and therefore real.

But the play-attitude also carries a penalty peculiar to itself; a penalty which is the mark of its error. It develops a disease of its

own, quite unknown to the practical attitude. This consists in the antinomies or dialectical contradictions which are alleged to beset all thinking. And of all thinkers of the modern period, it was Kant who first resuscitated these contradictions—and for the purpose of discrediting the very knowledge he had argued for—of the external world. But the discredit is as ill-founded as the self-grounding of mind. These contradictions are not given facts; a fact is given as what it is, and not as what is not. They are conjured up by thinking when thinking essays to determine by its own supposed nature what reality must be. This happens in the following way. Thought, as we have seen, is essentially a static affair: its only activity is that of attention, and attention once achieved, thought repeats or registers what is told to it. Its tendency is toward the given essence or content; it narrates what is the case. Transition from one object to another, which also is the case, it also narrates: certainly it cannot deny such transition, but on the other hand it cannot show the ground in one thing by which it passes into another. Action, on the other hand, is essentially transitive; in action the mind transcends itself and the present changes, bringing about a future. Such being the nature of thought, it follows that when thought alone is believed to constitute reality, reality is thereby conceived as one timeless whole or system. And as is the whole, so are the parts. Each element of a transition is conceived by thought as precisely what it is; thought aims at exactness, while action aims at the important, and lets the fringe of irrelevant detail take care of itself. Thus thought deals with terms, treating relations as terms also. Now when thought attempts to dictate to reality, it declares that all relation and all transition must consist of one term and another and another, and so on indefinitely. This was also pointed out by Bergson, but he went too far to the other extreme and condemned thought as false because it insisted upon the reality of terms. But it is not false that there are terms; falsity comes in when it is denied that one term can pass into another. When thought conceives its own standard to be the exclusive criterion of reality, it makes this denial. But that conception, as we have seen, is based upon a false notion of reality. Reality is object of action as well as of thought; as object of action, it is transitive, generative of results, and potent. If thought would renounce its pride and humble itself to learn of reality from practice—which learning constitutes verifica-

tion—it would see that transition belongs to terms. It is quite arbitrary, dogmatic, and groundless to deny that this can be so. And that is why in the old paradox of Zeno we can answer, *refutatur ambulando*; and the answer is a just one.

It is no proof of its unreality that an object manifests dialectical contradictions; it is rather a sign that the function of thought is not properly understood.

In summary of the third and most serious indictment of Kant's influence: we have found that the attitude of pure theory quite divorced from practice—an attitude introduced into modern thought by the Cartesian turning toward the subjective side of knowledge—was bound to make of philosophy a speculative game, and even a game in which the participants, having no external umpire, came to disagree about the rules, and eventually to find thought itself involved in contradictions. This subjective tendency, or self-consciousness of the knowing mind, was unfortunately greatly promoted by both the *Analytic* and the *Dialectic* of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. It seems to be an introversion as injurious to the advancement of knowledge as it is to an active and effective life. And it must be emphasized that much of the philosophical writing of the present day seems to be hopelessly embroiled in this introverted speculative game.

VIII

THE CENTRAL DOCTRINE OF THE KANTIAN
ETHICS

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THE CENTRAL DOCTRINE OF THE KANTIAN ETHICS

I

PROBABLY the most basic truth in the Kantian ethical theory is the insight that a life which is not integrated with all human life is not an absolutely good life. It falls short of the complete possibilities of good open to man. Kant himself did not state his position in these terms, and the terms in which he did state it are so challenging and so seemingly self-complete as they stand that one is instantly provoked to take them as they are given and to forget their larger meaning. But it seems very clear upon brief reflection that the basic contention of the Kantian ethics is that it is the universal element in human life, its oneness with all life, which is for Kant of primary moral importance and which alone can give to a life whatever absolute and unqualified moral significance it may have.

In order to understand the peculiar terms in which he cast this general doctrine, a brief reference to Kant's life and character seems unavoidable. The relevant facts are fairly well known, and only a few of the more salient ones require repetition. First, Kant was the son of humble and conscientious parents, and reared in a home where duty was a central concern and proper inner disposition the most prized human attribute. This moral atmosphere made an immediate, profound, and lasting imprint upon Kant's sensitive, reflective nature which the relatively narrow channels of his later experience were bound to deepen, instead of erase. Second, Kant inherited a weak physical constitution. By nature his body was more prone to give pain than to give pleasure. Nevertheless, by heroic effort and severe discipline Kant succeeded in making his body a fairly obedient vehicle of the great labor of his teaching and writing. This effective triumph of the will over the body, or of duty over nature, was one of the most fundamental experiences of Kant's inner life, and naturally colored powerfully the portrait of the good life acceptable to him, especially in as much as this was pre-disposed to be in terms of inner experience. Third, at the time

when his ethical views were taking definitive shape and at least a decade before publication of his first mature ethical treatise, Kant was a man with a mission, subordinating with pedantic rigor almost every possible interest to the single-minded realization of this mission. Moreover, the mission to which Kant was dedicated primarily from this time onward consisted of the isolation of the purely rational or *a priori* element from the mass of human experience, and of the exposition of this element first and foremost as the sole ground of exact science, which, for Kant, was the most triumphant type of universally valid experience.

It is not surprising therefore that upon coming to the definitive formulation of his ethics Kant should describe the moral life in the following terms: The universality by which a life becomes integrated with all life, and thus becomes as good a life as is open to man, consists solely of rationality, previous analyses having shown that rationality in its various forms is the sole universal element in human experience. Morality, however, is not abstract rational thinking. The most beautiful examples of morality are the dutiful actions of common people unconcerned with abstract thinking. Morality is practical action, the performance of duty. Hence, rationality as moral imposes itself as a duty. Indeed, being the sole meaning of universality, than which there is no higher moral principle, rationality imposes itself as an unconditional and supreme duty. Morality is absolute dedication to rationality, and the moral life is action based on the categorical subordination of all bodily desires, inclinations, and feelings to maxims whose principles are embodiments of rationality, and which possess that universality of form, or form of law, of which rationality consists.✓

It is irrelevant to our purpose to decide whether the foregoing account describes the precise epigenesis of the mature Kantian ethics. In any case, this account states the essence of Kant's ethical position in terms which seem to spring naturally and inevitably from Kant's autobiography. In any authentic analysis, therefore, it would seem necessary to consider the Kantian ethics in these peculiar terms, and in what follows, I propose to do this without forgetting at the same time the larger meaning which can also be attached to the Kantian position.

Kant's characteristic formulation of the supreme principle of the moral life is the categorical imperative: "Act only on that maxim

whereby thou canst at the same time will that it should become a universal law.¹ In explanation of the way this imperative is to be construed, Kant gives four examples of actions whose maxims in his judgment cannot be willed by rational beings as universal laws: suicide, making false promises, neglecting one's talent or perfection, and indifference to the happiness of others. In each of these examples, Kant's ostensible purpose is to show that one cannot universalize the maxim of the action and will the result as a universal law without making impossible the very action one is performing and so negating one's maxim. Thus, the case of making false promises: "For supposing it to be a universal law that everyone when he thinks himself in a difficulty should be able to promise whatever he pleases, with the purpose of not keeping his promise, the promise itself would become impossible, as well as the end that one might have in view in it, since no one would consider that anything was promised to him, but would ridicule all such statements as vain pretenses."² In other words, the maxim of the action once universalized makes impossible the action and so invalidates itself as a principle of action. It is self-contradictory or irrational. Similarly with the maxims of the other actions, suicide, etc. Once universalized, they prove self-contradictory, or irrational.

Some writers have criticized Kant's procedure here as a quite, futile attempt to squeeze concrete principles of conduct, such as telling truth and keeping promises, out of the abstract law of non-contradiction.³ What criticisms of the Kantian ethics seem most appropriate, we shall consider in a few moments. But this criticism does not seem to be just to Kant's intention here. In setting forth the categorical imperative, Kant's purpose seems to have been to give a description of moral obligation which provides a method for constructing or reconstructing prevalent principles of conduct so that those principles which were able to serve in all cases without exception could be shown to be so able, and thus fit to

¹ *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals*, Abbott translation, p. 38. Hereafter I will refer to this work of Kant's as *Fundamental Principles*, and to the *Critique of Practical Reason* as *Critique*. All quotations will be from Abbott's *Kant's Theory of Ethics* (London, 1909), which contains translations of these two works, and page references will be to the pages of this volume, unless otherwise specified.

² *Fundamental Principles*, p. 40.

³ cf. A. D. Lindsay, *Kant* (London, 1934), pp. 18off. and F. Paulsen, *Immanuel Kant*, English translation (New York, 1902), p. 331.

provide that oneness of moral agents foundational to the absolutely good life. The law of non-contradiction is introduced for checking the unrestricted validity of a principle. If a principle upon universalization negates itself, it cannot serve universally, and therefore cannot provide the absolutely necessary oneness. Thus, the categorical imperative is not an empty form from which one tries to squeeze or deduce by the principle of consistency a plurality of specific principles. It is rather a method for ordering one's specific principles so that they involve no favors to oneself not equally grantable to all, and so that they thus take on that oneness of form alone shareable by all.

The principle of rationality as Kant employs it in the moral imperative might be very justly described as the principle of impartiality. On the very first page of the *Fundamental Principles* Kant mentions the impartial spectator. To be rational in moral matters means to take what is sometimes called the objective standpoint, i.e. not "to put our own interests or those of our favorites first."⁴ To be rational is to infuse into conduct a form which is equally valid for all agents and therefore not biased toward anyone. Objectivity and impartiality, leading to maxims that are as fit to anyone as they are to oneself, express Kant's meaning of moral rationality as well as the principle of non-contradiction. In this light, the moral life, as Kant conceives it, consists of the determination of the will by the construction of ends in which the respect for impartiality or equity or universal validity is the sole principle of consideration, since it is the *sine qua non* of goodness. The moral life is a free creative life, an expression of inner spontaneity, since the principle of rationality springs from within, and its creativeness consists of the shaping of ends out of absolute respect for equity. Something of this creative conception of morality seems to have been already present to Kant's mind in his pre-critical thinking,⁵ and it is this, rather than the deduction of specific principles of conduct from an empty form, that seems to express most closely what Kant appears to have had in mind in his initial mature formulation of the fundamental principle of the moral life.

⁴ O. C. Jensen, "Kant's Ethical Formalism," *Philosophy*, Vol. IX, 1934, p. 197.

⁵ P. A. Schilpp, *Kant's Pre-Critical Ethics* (Evanston, 1938), pp. 141-3, 172-4.

What must be said of the portrait of the good life implied by this initial, mature formulation, in which impartiality or equity is the sole moral motive? The most that can be said of it, it seems to me, is that it is an entirely one-sided portrait. No doubt it depicts with undeniable force what each must do in regard to his own private maxims, and prescribes an elevated creative discipline for the inclinations which is absolutely necessary for the stipulated universality. But it contains no principle reaching beyond subjective inclination and directing one in respect to the moral situation which each must face in action. An analogy with science might be helpful. In science, it is certainly a part of good method to be impartial and objective and non-contradictory. All this is a *sine qua non* if a scientist's hypothesis is to have universal validity. But a scientist must seek to be more than merely impartial and coherent. Besides this, he must seek to be adequate to the facts of the situation for which he is devising an explanation. He must seek to reach out to the objective situation at the same time as he moderates his subjective inclination, and this orientation towards the situation is certainly as foundational in scientific method as the regulation of subjective attitude. A similar condition, I think, holds in the moral life. Some principle guiding effort in regard to the objective situation as well as a principle restraining subjective inclination is equally required. Continuing the analogy with science, perhaps the proper principle here can be summed up in this way, that the moral life consists not merely of not favoring oneself, but also of positively determining and seeking the good of all involved in a situation including oneself. Moral action is action which is not merely impartial but which is also at the same time generally fruitful. It is action in which one not only keeps within certain universal bounds but also positively actualizes within these limits and in the objective situation the good of all concerned.

Such action is appropriate for a life integrated with all life in a twofold sense. It repeats an abstract formal pattern (impartiality) open to all, and it effects a concrete material enrichment shared by all. The Kantian ethics of the moral law, on the other hand, provides an integration which is merely abstract and formal. It supplies a pattern for moral agents taken separately. It directs their actions so that each agent repeats the actions of others and shares a formal identity with them. But it makes no provision for each

agent to complement and enrich the others, and to share not only in a formal identity but also in a communal diversity. The Kantian ethics is the ethics of secluded universality. In this sense, it is no more than a portrait of one side of the moral life.

Kant himself seems to have sensed that an ethics in which mere formal rightness exhausts goodness is a one-sided ethics, and he made several attempts to enlarge his conception of goodness. The chief of these are contained in the concept of the kingdom of ends and in the triad of postulates of practical reason; which doctrines, together with the principle of the moral law, are the chief elements of the Kantian ethical theory.

II

In introducing the conception of a kingdom of ends, Kant reformulates the categorical imperative in the following terms: "So act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of any other, in every case as an end withal, never as a means only."⁶ The basis of this formulation of the imperative, as of the first formulation, is the concept of respect for rationality as of absolute worth. In the first formulation, rationality is thought of as enshrined in universal law. In the second formulation, it is thought of as enshrined in humanity understood as the rational nature of man. "Rational nature," says Kant, "exists as an end in itself."⁷ Similarly, the human being as an intelligence or as a rational nature exists as an end in himself.

Respect for humanity is a principle which holds on the face of it the greatest promise, and Kant's restatement of the four examples previously cited, in the light of this principle, inspires the hope that this new formulation of the moral imperative will lead to a conception of the good life as animated by more than the merely formal principle of universal impartiality. Actually, however, this does not happen. The new formulation, it is true, seems to give an explicit direction to the agent in regard to the moral situation. It states that respect for humanity is to be extended to all rational beings, not merely to oneself. But what this really amounts to is that the other moral agents are to be considered as self-govern-

⁶ *Fundamental Principles*, p. 47.

⁷ *ibid.*, p. 47.

ing beings, as legislators in their own right. They are to be treated as beings who can give a universal law to themselves, and they are not to be treated as beings who are to take their self-ordering from others. The new formulation of the categorical imperative simply universalizes the conception of the good life as essentially a subjective ordering of maxims according to the demands of reason for law valid for all without restriction. Each is not only to be concerned with the universal validity of his own maxim, but he is also to act so that everyone else can be concerned with the universal validity of his own maxim. Thus, the new formulation of the imperative merely states explicitly a condition under which all agents can be spontaneously united by formal repetition, and it is no closer than the original formulation to a description of the concern of the agent beyond his subjective maxim, except for the stipulation that one is not to be concerned with ordering the subjective maxims of others.

It is interesting to note in this connection that the conception of a kingdom of ends introduced by this new formulation of the imperative—the conception of each agent as at once the giver and the subject of the law—is a remarkably penetrating picture in moral terms of the essence of pure democracy. In a pure democracy, each member is theoretically both subject and author of the law, originating and fulfilling the law. He is a responsible agent both in the sense of being considered to be able to authorize the law and in the sense of standing on the same level as everyone else before the law. All this is true of Kant's kingdom of ends, if the law of this kingdom (a curiously atavistic name for a democracy) is remembered to be the moral law, not political legislation.

Kant's sympathy with democracy and his great interest in the rise of French and American democracy are well known. Nor did the excesses of the French Revolution dampen this ardor, since it was an ardor for the democratic principle, not for the aberrations of the men who battled for it. This democratic principle was embodied in the kingdom of ends, and the defect of pure democracy is shared by this ideal of a kingdom of ends. In a pure democracy, the individual is not only thought of as the final good, but also as already possessing within himself the complete principle of this good. Relations between individuals are so many external arrangements to repress those who might interfere with the actualization

of life, liberty, or some other inherently subjective principle, and in an ideal polity, where external repression would not be required, these relations would vanish to be replaced by no more than the abstract principle of formal identity. Each would go his own way under his own guidance and attain his own good, and there would be merely an abstractly similar pattern composed of the principle of liberty and self-determination in the various individual goods. In a pure democracy, the good of the individual is not conceived as primarily and unreservedly conditioned by a transeunt structure, so that it is not possible in any full sense except through the realization of a transeunt structure of goods. The good of the individual is simply within the individual himself, and if he is only let alone, and the business of government is to make arrangements for this, his good is possible in the fullest sense of the word. In Kant's kingdom of ends, the place of political government is taken by the principle of respect for the individual freedom of each by all. This permits each to go his own way unhampered, and each member of Kant's kingdom of ends is a rugged individualist, except that his ruggedness is rational and not the more familiar animal type prevalent in ordinary *laissez-faire* democracy.

Kant's formulation of the categorical imperative in terms of humanity and his conception of a kingdom of ends, then, make no essential correction of the one-sidedness in his original formulation of the principle of the good life. Indeed, in a certain sense, they mark a retrogression. They lead Kant to entertain the notion of moral reason as a sort of noumenal self. In the earlier portions of the *Fundamental Principles*, where Kant is close to the level of commonsense reflection, it is quite possible to interpret his moral reason as a functional factor which provides such a complete or universal vista of maxims of action that its determinations in regard to them are definitive and compulsive, worthy of absolute respect. But as Kant progresses from the level of commonsense to the standpoint of the critical philosophy, this possible mode of interpreting the moral reason becomes more blocked, and the notion of "a world of rational beings (*mundus intelligibilis*)"⁸ looms higher and higher above the horizon. In accordance with this notion, moral reason is not so much a peculiarity of human func-

⁸ *Fundamental Principles*, p. 57.

tioning whose relevance makes it absolutely decisive in the self-regulated action of the organism, but a superphysical self possessed of a manifest destiny and of a causality capable of achieving this destiny. It is true that Kant repeatedly qualifies his affirmation of a world of supersensible intelligences by saying that such a world is not theoretically verifiable, i.e. its existence cannot be exhibited in sensuous intuition. But there seems to be no doubt that Kant was convinced of its existence,⁹ and convinced that anyone interpreting the moral life correctly must also be convinced of its existence. Kant disclaimed merely that he could prove its existence in the sense of proof required, as he thought, by the canons of exact science.

This metaphysical dualism, a noumenal world and a phenomenal world, is nowhere more in evidence than in the discussions of the three postulates of practical reason. Of the three postulates, freedom in the sense of the possibility of determination of self by the moral law is, as Kant says in the *Preface to the second Critique*, the most central. Morality, as Kant understands the moral life, is nothing but determination of self by the moral law, and the moral life stands or falls with freedom. The other two postulates, immortality and God, are more extrinsic conditions, required to guarantee, respectively, that the moral life can be carried through successfully and that it will achieve a happiness proportionate to its success. Accordingly, Kant describes the concept of freedom as "the keystone of the whole system of pure reason,"¹⁰ and it is in connection with this concept that his metaphysical dualism is brought into the highest prominence.

That the dualism here between *causa noumenon* and *causa phenomenon*, between free cause and determined cause, has difficulties, Kant himself was clearly aware.¹¹ The achievement of moral determination, or determination of inner disposition by the moral law, requires at least that the *causa noumenon* have constraining power over the empirical self,¹² or, more precisely, that it have the power to prevent pleasure and inclination from determining the will. But, since pleasure and inclination are phenomenal

⁹ cf., e.g., *Critique*, p. 200: "the reality of the supersensible world is established."

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 88.

¹¹ cf. *ibid.*, pp. 194f.

¹² *Metaphysical Elements of Ethics*, Abbott, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

events, this prevention can be effected only if the noumenal cause have the power to intercept and redirect the course of phenomenal events, much as the Cartesian *res cogitans* has the power to swerve the pineal gland. Such a notion, however, conflicts with the conception of a closed system of phenomenal causation formulated in the *Critique of Pure Reason* as a mode of making possible the universal validity of the exact laws of natural science. Either the *causa noumenon* has no effect and morality becomes impossible, or it has an effect and the labors of the *Critique of Pure Reason* to give the physical principles of natural science universal or uninterrupted sovereignty over all phenomena whatsoever must be set aside. To remove morality wholly to the noumenal plane to avoid this dilemma¹³ is only to make inexplicable the patent moral effect of pleasure and inclination upon the will, the consequent unholiness of the will, and the presence of the ought—all basic ingredients of the moral life of man, as Kant describes it.

Of the two other postulates, those concerning immortality and God, little need be added along these lines. Immortality is conceived as a "progress in infinitum"¹⁴ and is held to be required in order that the immediate and complete determination of will by the moral law, characteristic of the holy disposition, be possible to man. Presumably, this immortality consists of successive acts of the self extending far beyond its life in the sensible world and increasingly approximating the type of determination habitual with the holy will. But an immortality of succession in a timeless¹⁵ supersensible world is a conception to which it is difficult to attach any meaning whatsoever. Nor is the third postulate any more intelligible. God is postulated to guarantee that happiness will be awarded to the dutiful in proportion to their virtue. But if happiness means sense pleasure, it is clear that God does not always proportion it to virtue in this world, and it is difficult to understand how in a life beyond the grave where there are no senses He could possibly repair this omission. On the other hand, if happiness means simply the elevated contentment intrinsic to performance of duty, the connection between virtue and happiness is analytical, and no external agent is required.

¹³ cf. *Critique*, p. 197.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 218.

¹⁵ cf. *ibid.*, p. 197.

What is worth remarking about this third postulate, the union of happiness with virtue by God, is not so much the metaphysical dualism lying behind it and diminishing its plausibility. It is rather the recognition implicit in the postulate that the attainment of any good except the fulfilment of the moral law lies outside the intrinsic scope of an agent's moral effort. The principle of happiness is not an internal, material complement of the formal principle of the moral law. It is an extrinsic, indeterminate supplement requiring a *deus ex machina* to attach it to moral action. The moral life is simply universalizing one's maxims out of absolute respect for the moral law. To secure anything beyond this activity of subjective ordering requires more than a principle intrinsic to autonomous moral action. In general, this means that the concrete good to be realized in a moral situation, as distinct from the abstract pattern to be realized in the agent, is the concern of God, or, at least, that the realization of this good is not an intrinsic part of the moral effort of the agent.

In the *Metaphysical Elements of Ethics*,¹⁶ Kant mentions two ends which are also duties: our own perfection, and the happiness of others. In a sense, Kant is merely repeating here the last two of the four examples cited in the *Fundamental Principles*. But these two ends are now presented, not as illustrating what is meant by maxims with acceptable forms, but as duties implied by our nature. The second of the two duties, namely, the happiness of others, appears to embody a direction toward the moral situation. As Kant explains this duty, it has two parts: giving physical assistance to others without compromising our own physical happiness, and putting no stones of moral stumbling in the path of our fellows. But as Kant himself admits the first of these parts is indeterminate and the second is negative.¹⁷ Moreover, the principle of beneficence expressed in this duty has not the rank here of a moral equal of the principle of law, a material coordinate of the formal principle of law. It is thought of as deriving its *moral* stature from the formal principle, as being morally secondary. This is, of course, in accordance with Kant's usual views.¹⁸ Nevertheless, it is in passages such as these that Kant comes closest to making the amends which

¹⁶ Abbott, *op. cit.*, pp. 296ff.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 304.

¹⁸ *Fundamental Principles*, p. 14.

his one-sided position seems to demand. Kant's failure to make these amends satisfactorily is probably due to his failure to appreciate anywhere in his philosophy the fact that material content is as final and ultimate as rational form, and in consequence that the determinations by imagination of the particular good of each involved in a moral situation are just as necessary and just as basic to a life fully integrated with all life as are the largely precautionary and general virtues of impartiality and objectivity.

III

Kant's ethics, then, depicts the subjective formal attitude conditioning the good life, and it gets only a short way, if at all, beyond this. So far as it goes, however, the Kantian ethical analysis is a wondrously trenchant and systematic account. No ethical writing depicts with quite the force, clarity, and systematic completeness the principle of formal universality which is an indispensable element in that unity of all through which the fullest good of each alone seems possible of attainment.

Of the numerous other valuable elements in Kant's ethical doctrines, the following seem to me to be the most worthy of remembrance at the present time:

- ✓ First, Kant's insistence upon the dignity and absolute worth of all human beings. Kant's ethics is not the ethics of the privileged person. Under the influence of Rousseau and, no less, under the influence of his own social background and preferences, Kant conceived the ideal moral agent not as a scholar or an esthete or a philosopher, not as a prince or a pagan colossus, but as the common man. Each man, even the lowliest, has an absolute value and is a final good, since the moral law, which demands absolute respect from all, is present with equal clarity and force in even the humblest man. Perhaps Kant interpreted this conception of each man as an end in himself in a too atomistic as well as in a too rationalistic manner, as I have suggested in the discussion of the kingdom of ends. But this is irrelevant. The point is that Kant recognized, as a matter of common equity involved in the fact that each person is a human being, that no man should be the mere tool of the ruthless ambitions of any other. The peasant, the worker, the common citizen of any profession, color, creed: each is entitled

to an unequivocal right of reflective self-determination in conduct, and no man is to be treated as a mere means and be subordinated by force or brutality to the ends which overlords in their own conscience happen to decide are worth choosing. Such views are plainly implied, if not stated, in Kant's ethical doctrines (I do not say in his explicit political doctrines), and clearly they are far from irrelevant to the life of man at the present time.

Second, the recognition that the basic instrument of the good life is reason. Here again there is probably an element of exaggeration in Kant's views. Reason determines merely the formal identity of pattern in the good life, and this must be supplemented by some such power as imagination to determine the material diversity of interests in such a way that they can be integrated concretely as well as abstractly into a structure of goods. But reason is certainly an indispensable element in the good solution of moral problems. Some point of complete agreement is required for a diversity of interests to have stability and harmonious spread, and for rational beings this point can be reached only by the satisfaction of reason. In our day, where fraud and terror are often used as social solvents, reason is supplanted by "blood-thinking," and coercion and pressures of all sorts are employed to establish the agreement within which people live. In these cases, life has become for many largely a cauldron of fear and hate, and uneasiness has supplanted reverence as the spring of conduct. The abdication of reason is at the same time the abdication of goodness. The Kantian ethical doctrines teach this with an austerity and luminosity that make it unmistakably relevant to our times, even more so than it was to Kant's own day.

Third, the recognition that discipline is a vital factor in the good life. This is the recognition that if the good is to be attained at all, desires and feelings, rhetoric, and wild enthusiasms must not be allowed to cloud the clarity of one's vision. As was his custom in moral matters, Kant tended to go to extremes in this matter, describing all desires and feelings except the pure reverence for the moral law as pathological. Yet Kant's essential point, that feeling can be admitted only as an intensifying factor of vision and must be subordinated to the hard clarity of impartial reason, seems to be sound enough. Where reason is overwhelmed and

imaginative apprehension of the good of others in their own diverse terms is distorted by undisciplined emotion, all action becomes hit or miss, and the good becomes accidental and precarious. Kant's severe and stoical manner of expressing this truth tends to make his ethics seem to be a command for unrelenting repression and thus to be too forbidding for present day ears. But Kant's intention appears to have been merely to insist that our irrational nature must always be brought within the framework of reason. It is not to be without play at all, but to find its scope within those confines wherein reason and (I would add) imagination are able to see that it can go ahead with equity and with profit to all involved.

It is interesting to note that those who are carried away by emotions fogging their vision, those who abdicate reason and resort to brutality and deceit, and those who treat others merely as means are often the same people. These three deviations from the good seem to be three deviations from the same straight line. Such facts with others suggest that in his ethical writings Kant attained a degree of coherence and unity not always associated with his other productions, especially his writings on the theory of knowledge. But coherent or not, one-sided or not, the Kantian moral teachings still possess, as the points just enumerated make clear, a vitality and cogency and relevance to our day that should give them for us a position of eminence and great respect in the literature of ethics. ✓

IX

KANT'S POSTULATE OF PRACTICAL FREEDOM

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KANT'S POSTULATE OF PRACTICAL FREEDOM

I

WRITING on Kant at this late day is apt to have the dubious impressiveness—to quote a pleasantry of Laird's—"of beating a small drum at the rear of a huge procession." Can anything be said that is either new or important? Perhaps, however, such a question overlooks the fact that from time to time truth must be reappropriated, and that historical change itself provides insights which suggest a new appraisal of fundamental ideas. At the worst, philosophical criticism—like the collecting of antique furniture—may achieve a sort of reflexive originality: the novelty of admiring the old whose value has been forgotten. In this process of continuous reappraisal reputations alternately wax and wane. This has been eminently true of Kant as a moralist. Since Kant's profound influence on the earlier Romanticism, the tendency of a century of criticism has been one of depreciation. Every schoolboy can refute his arguments: his formalism is sterile, his maxim of universality is hopelessly ambiguous, his apotheosis of duty is fanatical legalism camouflaged in rhetoric. Yet Kant rises above his critics and commentators. This is not only because the subtlety of his thought is not easily reduced to simple formulae, but because, in the end, the spirit of the man rises above the letter. Beneath the angular and belabored exposition, like embers buried in ashes, may be felt the glow of a personality singularly intense in its spiritual integrity. This "spiritual" quality—a maddening term to logical positivists—might well be irrelevant to a *Critique of Pure Reason*, but, in a *Critique of Practical Reason*, I submit, it may well be the "root of the matter."¹ It must be admitted that in a hedonistic age, unhabituated to discipline, and amiably self-indulgent, Kant, the rigorist and "connoisseur of conscience,"² has little appeal. There are signs, however, that our generation is at length becoming

¹ H. A. Prichard, *Duty and Interest* (Oxford, 1928), p. 43.

² T. V. Smith, *Beyond Conscience* (New York, 1934), p. 25.

uneasy about the corrosion of the ethical convictions of society. When the logic of factualism reaches a moral *reductio ad absurdum*, men begin to look again at the possibilities of the "high *a priori* road." Such a moral stress is especially characteristic of periods of social disintegration, and in this respect Kant's century was analogous to our own. It may be partly for this reason that the Kantian approach is again receiving sympathetic treatment at the hands of eminent moralists.³

II

Following in the wake of this current reappraisal of Kant's ethics, I should like to draw attention to some of the problems raised by Kant's first postulate of "practical" reason, the postulate of freedom (the other two relating to immortality and God). This is usually aphoristically expressed in the form, "I ought, therefore I can." That this postulate—however well founded or not—is really crucial in Kant's ethics may be seen in the fact that it brings into court all the issues at once. These are obviously (1) the validity of categorical imperatives, (2) the basis of moral responsibility, (3) the genuineness and extent of freedom, (4) the transition from ethics to metaphysics, (5) the problem of evil and its solution in terms of ethical rationalism.⁴

Now nothing short of a treatise could adequately deal with so formidable a list of problems. I shall accordingly, in this essay, limit my discussion to certain considerations pertaining to the last three. It is widely asserted that Kant proved ethics to be "autonomous" and that, on his own showing, the theological addenda of the *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* are superfluous, and may therefore be ignored as only a parting salute to his youthful orthodoxy. I should like to show that this is not the case, and that, in particular, the postulate of freedom inevitably involves the problems of Part III of his philosophy of religion. The result of

³ I refer to Prichard, Ross, Field, Ewing, Carritt, Joseph, Reid, Scheler, Tillich, et al.

⁴ Kant states in the *Preface* of the *Critique of Practical Reason* (T. K. Abbott, *Kant's Theory of Ethics* [London, 1889], p. 88): "Inasmuch as the reality of the concept of freedom is proved by an apodictic law of practical reason, it is the *keystone* of the whole system of pure reason, even the speculative, and all other concepts (those of God and immortality) which, as being mere ideas, remain in it [i.e. in speculative reason] unsupported, now attach themselves to this concept, and by it obtain consistence and objective reality."

the inquiry will show, I believe, that this is no peculiarity of Kantian ethics, but is involved in all ethics that asserts freedom to be an essential characteristic of moral personality.

In developing this view, I shall assume, with respect to the first two problems above mentioned, that the position of Kant and certain modern "neo-intuitionists"—notably, Prichard, Ross, and Joseph—are, in their general tenor, and irrespective of subordinate differences, substantially correct. There are, then, indefeasible duties or categorical imperatives. Some of these, at least, can be known though they need not be justified by anything beyond themselves. They must, therefore, be known intuitively or *a priori*. And if there is anything "I ought to do," it follows axiomatically that "I can," since it involves a manifest absurdity to impute moral responsibility where there is no freedom to choose and initiate.

Kant nowhere, I believe, states the postulate of freedom in the succinct form "I ought, therefore I can," but this form expresses his thought with sufficient accuracy. His principle statements on the subject, relative to our discussion, are as follows:⁵

- ✓ (1) "The *will* is a kind of causality belonging to living beings in so far as they are rational, and *freedom* would be this property of such causality that it can be efficient, independently on foreign causes *determining* it."⁶
- ✓ (2) "It is not enough to predicate freedom of our own will, from whatever reason, if we have not sufficient grounds for predicating the same of all rational beings. For as morality serves as a law for us only because we are *rational beings*, it must hold for all rational beings; and as it must be deduced simply from the property of freedom, it must be shown that freedom also is a property of all rational beings."⁷
- ✓ (3) "Freedom and an unconditional practical law reciprocally imply each other."⁸
- ✓ (4) "He judges, therefore, that he can do a certain thing because he is conscious that he ought, and he recognizes that

⁵ All citations from Abbott, *Kant's Theory of Ethics*, are hereinafter referred to as A.

⁶ A., p. 65.

⁷ A., p. 66.

⁸ A., p. 117.

he is free, a fact which but for the moral law he would never have known.”⁹

✓(5) “It is always in everyone’s power to satisfy the categorical command of morality; whereas it is but seldom possible, and by no means so to everyone, to satisfy the empirically conditioned precept of happiness, even with regard to a single purpose.”¹⁰

✓(6) “As to the means for obeying this law, these need not in this case be taught, for in this respect whatever he wishes to do he can do.”¹¹

These passages show that Kant, when writing as a rationalist rather than an ethical theologian, accepts the axiom of freedom as subject to no qualifications. “Whatever [a man] wishes to do he can do.” Any qualifications would endanger his basic contention, the autonomy of the self-legislative will, on which the dignity of man as a moral personality rests. If the will must be implemented from the outside even to the slightest degree it enters the fatal circle of extraneous causality. It becomes a heteronomous will, and to that degree bad. Kant is therefore forced to affirm both the categorical imperative of perfection, and the will’s utter self-sufficiency for its attainment. But on these terms it is difficult to understand why all men are not perfect, and since evil *is* a fact that cannot be denied, its presence poses for Kant a crucial problem, the problem, namely, of how a pure, autonomous will may be overcome by sensuous solicitation, and, while legislating an imperative ideal of perfection, either *cannot* enact it, and so becomes heteronomous, or *will* not enact it, and so becomes diabolical. Heteronomy, implying a will subject to overbearing cause, excludes freedom and denies meaning to the moral “ought.” Whenever such heteronomy occurs, therefore, duty ceases to be categorical for the simple reason that without freedom it ceases to exist. On the other hand, a diabolical will cannot be rational, since evil is precisely what cannot be universalized by a reasonable being according to the maxim of universality. These considerations impelled Kant to relieve the situation by the introduction of his distinction

⁹ A., p. 119.

¹⁰ A., p. 126.

¹¹ A., p. 127.

of man as at once phenomenal and noumenal, a solution, as we shall see, that is untenable. In any event, qualifications of the postulate are required, and Kant, as a matter of fact, covertly introduces them in his *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*.

Now, in view both of the critical importance of this postulate and of the difficulties in which it is shown to be involved, it seems appropriate to ask how Kant conceived its logical status. It is not, Kant insists, an axiom of reason possessing, as the rationalists would say, "self-luminous truth," for, if so, it would have to be analytic and tautologous, i.e. its predicate would be conceptually contained in its subject.¹² Kant, as is well known, based his philosophy on Hume's discovery that many of these axioms—like the causal axiom—are in reality *synthetic*, and that therefore "*they have no intrinsic necessity, and cannot possess the absolute authority ascribed to them by the rationalists.*"¹³ But notwithstanding this synthetic character, the postulate of freedom is also *a priori*, since its necessity is presupposed as a condition of "practical" or moral activity. Its "deduction," in fact, consists merely in showing that it is a *presupposition of duty*. Duty, however, possesses not a *theoretical* but a *moral self-evidence*, and whatever is necessarily involved in duty, therefore, is likewise only morally certain. Kant says, "Every being that cannot act except *under the idea of freedom* is just for that reason in a practical point of view really free, that is to say, all laws which are inseparably connected with freedom have the same force for him as if his will had been shown to be free in itself by a proof theoretically conclusive."¹⁴ It is doubtless for this reason that Kant speaks of a *postulate* of freedom rather than an *axiom*. This distinction is more than a terminological quibble, for if the principle of freedom be a *theoretical* axiom, its denial involves a *logical* contradiction, and those who reject it are convicted merely of bad logic. On the other hand if it is a *moral* axiom, or postulate, its denial indicates a conflict of fundamental moral intuitions each of which claims objective validity.

¹² cf. *Critique of Pure Reason* (A6ff. = B10ff.) and *Prolegomena*, §2, b,c (quoted by Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to 'Kant's Critique of Pure Reason'* [London, 1918], pp. 59-60).

¹³ Kemp Smith, *op. cit.*, p. xxxv.

¹⁴ A., p. 67. Kant adds in a later note (*ibid.*, p. 88) that "freedom is the *ratio essendi* of the moral law, while the moral law is the *ratio cognoscendi* of freedom."

Now the latter type of contradiction is a serious matter for ethics, since it involves uncertainty in one of its categorial notions. The reality and extent of freedom is a fundamental issue, not only for Kant, but for all ethics whatsoever. It seems obvious that terms like "duty," "responsibility," "loyalty," the "dignity of man," etc. would be eviscerated of meaning unless both intelligent *choice* and *power of initiation* are realities. Kant's postulate, therefore, taken broadly, expresses an inexpugnable truth of the moral life. Freedom is an idea necessary to morality, nay to the *form of personal existence itself*, for a person is, as an automaton is not, a self-determining being: one who can "act in the fullest sense of the term."¹⁵

We must now notice, however, that the self-evidence of this axiom, even when taken as practical, has been called in question; not, moreover, from the standpoint of scientific determinism merely, but in the interests of morality itself. If so, is not ethics betrayed in the house of its friends?

Everyone would agree, I suppose, that theistic religion has a profound interest in vindicating the reality of moral responsibility. Yet it is well known that orthodox Christianity, from Paul and Augustine to Luther and Calvin, has tended to deny the freedom of the will in the most unqualified terms. Thus, in his controversy with the humanistic Erasmus,¹⁶ Luther argues that ethical imperatives neither logically nor morally imply freedom. He contends that *semper [verbis imperativi] significari, quid debeant, non quid possint homines*.¹⁷ Yet it is peculiar to theological determinism that the denial of freedom is not allowed to invalidate moral responsibility. Even though I "cannot," I still "ought" and am no less guilty in my impotence. For, Luther continues, *praecipiuntur autem non intempestive nec frustra, sed ut homo superbus et caecus*

¹⁵ A. A. Bowman in *Studies in the Philosophy of Religion* (London, 1938), Vol. II, p. 97 states that "in relation to personality, morality may be conceived as a transcendental condition, that is, as a condition which is presupposed in the very possibility of personal existence." "The capacity to act in the fullest sense of the term is, as we shall see, one of the unique characteristics of personality; the obligation to act is a corollary of the capacity" (p. 104).

¹⁶ *De servo arbitrio*, 1525 (Luther's *Werke*, Weimar ed., Vol. XVIII).

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 677. "Always by such imperatives is meant what men *ought*, not what they *can*, do."

per haec suae impotentiae morbum discat, si tentet facere, quod praecipitur.¹⁸

Now it might be contended that such self-contradictions are not to be wondered at in theological dogmas, since many philosophers believe theology to be nonsense.¹⁹ However, the problem is not necessarily derived from theological dogmas for it appears in practically the same form in the ethical writings of philosophers. Let us note, for example, the observations of H. W. B. Joseph on this problem and study their implications. In *Some Problems in Ethics*,²⁰ Chapter I, it is said that the recognition "that man ought or ought not do certain actions"²¹ gives ground for denying the correctness of the "scientific theory of the world." That is to say, "ought" in some sense implies "can." Assuming this for the moment, we note further that "if moral excellence in a finite spirit arises when there is developed in it such a mind and will as would, *pro suo posse*, realize this form [of the good life], then, whether a man fails because he misconceives the good . . . or because the thought of it does not determine his action, he is defective in his moral nature, and so not free from blame."²² Now previously Joseph argues that we often acknowledge an obligation (like justice) before we know fully "what and where it is."²³ But, if so, this formal and material ignorance would certainly result in some cases in "misconceiving the good" and consequently in moral failure. Again, Joseph shows that a form of life whose realization, he thinks, we *ought* to desire—namely, a world order in which all human conflicts are settled on

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 678. "These precepts are neither inappropriately nor vainly commanded, but in order that proud, blind man—should he attempt to *do* what is commanded—might thereby learn the disease of his own impotency."

¹⁹ Against the dictum of T. V. Smith (*op. cit.*, p. 68): "Religions will enshrine either goodness or power; if power they are irrelevant to conscience, for validity has nothing to do with power . . . ; if goodness they are identical at bottom with conscience, and whether they have a god at all is morally irrelevant," we may quote J. W. Oman (*Grace and Personality* [Cambridge, 1919], pp. 61f.): "On the one hand, religion ceases to be spiritual when moral independence is sapped. Faith is not spiritual unless won by our own insight into truth, received by the consent of our own wills, and applied to the government of our own lives. Without goodness shining by its own light . . . faith becomes mere submission to arbitrary greatness . . . ; on the other hand, morality ceases to be truly ethical when religious dependence is rejected."

²⁰ Oxford, 1931.

²¹ *ibid.*, p. 13.

²² *ibid.*, p. 132.

²³ *ibid.*, p. 71.

the principles of right—would require for its realization a kind of “heroic virtue” hardly to be expected of human nature.²⁴ In other words, the facts compel us to say that the thought of such an obligatory ideal does not, and cannot, determine our action. Thus we reach the result that though I cannot either fully “know” or “do” my duty—the will in these respects being impotent—*yet my duty exists*, and my inability to do it does not make me “free from blame.” Apparently, then, the “ought” stands, even though it does not imply “can.”²⁵

It might be urged that a less stringent conception of the moral ideal avoids this contradiction. Suppose it be assumed, as Carritt says, “that a man can have no duties which he cannot perform.”²⁶ It is then reasonable to assert with Laird that “the ultimate moral question” is only “the best use of the whole of our resources, capacities, and opportunities.”²⁷ Laird, following a suggestion of Bradley’s,²⁸ says, “It is self-evident that anyone ought to do the best he is able to do, and that, if any given action is not the best he can do, then it cannot be his duty to do it.”²⁹ Logically, I believe, this excludes from “our duty” both what is better than “our best” and what is worse than “our best.” The paradox lies in that part of the assertion which claims that we have no duty to do better than “our best.” On the face of it this seems reasonable because “a man can have no duties which he cannot perform.”

Now Bradley himself subjected this position to a searching criticism which might well be read in this connection.³⁰ The doctrine that “the moral man is the man who tries to do the best which he knows”³¹ means “to credit a man merely with what comes out of his will” and “that, in fine,” says Bradley, “is not anything.”³² In the first place this view must hold that it is alike

²⁴ *Some Problems in Ethics*, p. 135.

²⁵ E. F. Carritt, in his *Theory of Morals* (London, 1928, p. 140), comments on this as the “most puzzling point in ethics” on which “most systems of ethics, as I understand them, have conspicuously failed to help us.”

²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 140. Obviously Kant would agree; instead, however, of abating the claims of duty, Kant would assert the complete competence of the will.

²⁷ John Laird, *A Study in Moral Theory* (London, 1926), p. 56.

²⁸ *Ethical Studies* (Oxford, 1927), p. 157n. and p. 237.

²⁹ Laird, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

³⁰ *Appearance and Reality* (London, 1925), pp. 429ff.

³¹ *ibid.*, p. 431.

³² *ibid.*, p. 433.

morally irrelevant whether "the best he knows is *not* the best," or, whether "he fails to accomplish [anything] and ends in an attempt."³³ But this, says Bradley, makes it "hard to find a proper sense in which the morality of one time or person stands above that of others,"³⁴ for, after all, a man's "best" may be morally worthless; or, as Taylor says, may be "only making the best of a bad job."³⁵ Moreover, if we consider the "doing" part of this injunction, we note with Bradley that it is limited by such factors as disposition, bringing-up, mental and physical weakness, or lack of natural gifts.³⁶ "Nor, again," he continues, "do we find a less difficulty, when we turn to consider moral *knowledge*. For one man by education or nature will know better than another, and certainly no one can possibly know always the best. But, once more, we cannot allow for this, and must insist that it is morally irrelevant. In short, it matters nothing what anyone knows, and we have just seen that it matters as little what anyone does. . . . Goodness, in short, meant at the beginning that one does what one can, and it has come now to mean merely that one does what one does."³⁷ In substance, then, the argument amounts to this: if we begin by making the "ought" correlative and proportionate to the "can," we end—on noting that analysis decreases the "can" to a vanishing quantity—by reducing the "ought" itself to a non-entity. Once again, then, if moral experience guarantees the "ought," it does not seem necessarily to validate the "can."

Thus if we ask "what we really think"³⁸ about Kant's postulate of freedom we find that, on the one hand, it is morally self-evident, and that, on the other hand, it is not. As against scientific determinism, duty is unquestionably the ground of asserting freedom as the minimum condition of there being any moral agents whatsoever. Without it, morality seems clearly to be something fictitious. On the other hand, once freedom is granted, nothing but "omnipotence" seems adequate to the imperative commands of duty. But since facts clearly refute absolute freedom, our initial understanding of the postulate requires us to scale down the im-

³³ *ibid.*, pp. 431f.

³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 432.

³⁵ *The Faith of a Moralist* (London, 1930), Vol. I, p. 298.

³⁶ *Appearance and Reality*, pp. 433f.

³⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 434f.

³⁸ cf. W. D. Ross, *The Right and the Good* (Oxford, 1930), pp. 39-41.

perative ideal to fit the actual capacities of average human nature. We are then thrown into the moral contradiction of not seeing how we *can* have a duty that we yet see clearly *is* our duty.

Now both of these conclusions, either that morality is a fiction, or that we are obliged to pursue only a limited and attainable good, are in reality a denial of the authority, i.e. the imperative character, of the moral ideal altogether. For once the notion of an imperative "ought" is allowed to enter an otherwise factual world, and it becomes incumbent to seek a better than the "is"—though it be only in the slightest degree "better"—the universal at work in this "better" is found to point to a "best" which dialectically drives the moral quest on a seemingly endless career.

It is, as I wish now to show, this dialectical nature of morality which is the principle cause of the doubts that have been raised concerning the self-evidence of Kant's postulate of freedom. Stated briefly, the difficulty seems to be this: the "ought" cannot be kept commensurate with ability; the "can" cannot be kept adequate to the ideal. Both the "ought" and the "can" exhibit a characteristic dialectical development. The dialectical development of the "ought" exhibits the expansion of moral *knowledge*, while that of the "can" exhibits the increase of moral *power*. But, with respect to both knowledge and power, the problem posed by Kantian ethics proves to be identical: how, namely, the insufficiency of human practical reason³⁹ may be heteronomously supplemented without doing violence to its moral autonomy.

III

On the one hand, the "ought" cannot be kept commensurate with our ability. It constantly tends, once reflection raises human living above the instinctive level, to transcend what is immediately attainable in terms of my present resources for decision and achievement. Undoubtedly this process begins at the level of instinct. The germ of morality is already present in instinctive animal benevolence. At this sub-reflective level natural inclination and the principle of ideal good are allies. For example, mothers

³⁹ Kant would demur to the qualifier "human," since apparently the noumenal reason expresses the transcendental unity of all "rational natures as such" in respect to which all particular rational beings are already identified with God. cf. C. C. J. Webb, *Kant's Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford, 1926), pp. 195 ff.

everywhere, from savagery to civilization, know that they "ought" to assist their children when in distress and experience self-reproach and unworthiness if they fail to do so. Though it is true that what I "ought" and what I desire are here *materially* identical, their *formal* separation is already imminent. As Kant would say, this particular case involves a "maxim" or principle, which once "brought to intuition"⁴⁰ and universalized becomes a universal duty. Thus the validity of the conviction that I ought to do this particular good to this particular person is seen in due time to involve commitment to a *principle* of doing good in general to mankind in general. This is the objective principle of duty already covertly acknowledged in a particular case. It is not implied, of course, that one can perform an abstract act *in rerum natura* with reference to abstract situations. All actual *occasions* of duty are completely individualized. Nevertheless, once this principle is seen by intuitive induction,⁴¹ the good in any new concrete occasion is seen to be such by virtue of the presence in it of this universal element. The good is a *universal*, though not an empty or totally abstract universal. It is *that which can be endlessly specified in a diversity of forms and particulars*. It is the principle of the good *per se*. Now this is what the formalism of Kant really means. Kant insists that no action that is not done for the sake of this principle, i.e. as not intending to realize the principle of goodness in this specific contingency, is morally right. An analogy might help to emphasize the point. Suppose you are required to draw an ellipse. Now if you do not know what an ellipse is, it will be a lucky accident if you draw one; and if you do not know when you have done it, can you really be said to have realized your intention? If, instead, you are shown a diagram on the blackboard and are told that this is an ellipse, you may proceed mechanically to copy it more or less faithfully. But since this empirical object departs from "ideal" ellipticity in many details—such as its "lines" having breadth or not having systematic curvature—the more faithfully you *copy* the more you frustrate your intention.⁴² You can really

⁴⁰ See Kant's use of this expression, A., p. 55.

⁴¹ cf. W. E. Johnson, *Logic* (Cambridge, 1922), Part II, Chap. viii, "Intuitive Induction."

⁴² cf. Kant, A., p. 25: "Imitation finds no place at all in morality, and examples serve only for encouragement." In the *Methodology of Pure Practical Reason*, this unguarded statement is somewhat modified.

follow instructions so as to achieve a maximum of "good results" only if you proceed on a knowledge of the *principle* of an ellipse. For you cannot aim at all, much less aim rightly, unless you know "what you are aiming at." And this "what" is, I submit, always an embodied universal, and not a *bare* particular.

Now, far from this being the source of a static and stereotyped morality, this formal character of duty is the condition of individuality and moral progress. True, principles impose a certain unity of form upon human action, but this is quite compatible with unlimited variety of application. Why, for example, can Roman law still function as a fundamental basis of English common law? It is precisely because the Stoic lawyers reduced law to universal principles of justice, and these are independent of time, race, or national customs.

In insisting on this formal character of the moral law, I hold, then, that Kant was right, though Kant seems to have failed to see the exact function of experience in enabling us to realize how this form may be specified. He is quite right in insisting that the moral law is no mere empirical generalization from the actual constitution of human nature.⁴³ On the other hand, in insisting as he does in some passages that the whole content of the moral law is to be deduced *a priori* from the conception of a rational being as such⁴⁴ he exposes himself to the valid criticism that such a formalism is sterile.

The reason why Kant overstressed the formal character of morality is sufficiently obvious. It is a consequence of the general tenor of the critical philosophy: the basic distinction of noumenal and phenomenal, coupled with the view that all formal relations are the work of reason acting in accordance with synthetic *a priori* principles. Since moral laws are purely noumenal, they are not embodied in experience at all. Experience at best is only a "type" of a moral order.⁴⁵ Since, moreover, the moral law is formal, it must, in accordance with critical principles, be *prescribed* by reason.

⁴³ A., pp. 60ff.: "Empirical principles are wholly incapable of serving as a foundation for moral laws . . . for the unconditional practical necessity which is . . . imposed on them [by the nature of a rational being as such] is lost when their foundation is taken from the particular constitution of human nature."

⁴⁴ A., p. 28: "Since moral laws ought to hold good for every rational creature, we must derive them from the general concept of a rational being."

⁴⁵ A., p. 159: "Of the *Typic* of the *Pure Practical Judgment*."



F DÖRSTLING

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Professor Kraus Kriegsrat Scheffner Medizinalrat Haagen
Kaufmann Mohrthv. Hartmann Philos gen d Magus d Nordens v. Hippiel Oberbürgermeistr v K. Protest Erzbischof v Borowsk v
Immanuel Kant Kaufmann Jacoby
Kaufmann Jacoby v Hippel Oberbürgermeistr v K. Protest Erzbischof v Borowsk v
KANT UND SEINE TISCHGENOSSEN
Gedacht ist das Jahr 1786

"We can become conscious of pure practical laws," he states, "by attending to the necessity with which reason prescribes them."⁴⁶ If this were really true, the prescribing reason would indeed contain the whole content of the moral ideal, and Kant's attempt at a formal deduction of duties without benefit of experience would have been successful. As a matter of fact, however, his critics have had no trouble in pointing out that the alleged deductions constantly draw on empirical knowledge.⁴⁷ Had Kant been able to acknowledge a *receptive* as well as a *prescriptive* function of reason such as W. E. Johnson has described under the head of "intuitive induction,"⁴⁸ he would have greatly strengthened his essential position. He could then have shown how reason could draw from experience without prejudice to its autonomy. For, after all, so far as moral knowledge is concerned, all that is necessary to preserve the autonomy of the moral agent upon which Kant insists is that practical reason should *see for itself*, and not that it should see what is *produced by, or out of*, itself. To paraphrase his own statement, Kant might have argued that though moral knowledge begins *with* experience, it does not follow that it arises entirely *from* experience.⁴⁹ From this point of view a reconciliation of the relative truths of formalism vs. utilitarianism, objectivism vs. relativism, would have been possible.⁵⁰

Had Kant been in a position to adopt this procedure, he might also have found—to use a somewhat facetious expression—a more elastic rigorism compatible with the solemn majesty of the law. To take the well worn example of whether it is ever permissible to tell a lie, I find when I reflect on such a situation that there is involved an essential principle of truthfulness and integrity in human relations which constitutes an inviolable obligation. To concede an exception to this principle is *never* my duty. *In this*

⁴⁶ A., p. 118.

⁴⁷ Schopenhauer's caustic analysis in *The Basis of Morality* (Chap. iv, "On the Basis of the Kantian Ethics") set the style of this line of criticism.

⁴⁸ *op. cit.*, p. 189.

⁴⁹ cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, B1.

⁵⁰ Commendable attempts at a systematic resolution of these antitheses are to be found in two recent writers: W. T. Stace's *The Concept of Morals* (New York, 1937), and C. E. M. Joad's *Guide to the Philosophy of Morals and Politics* (New York, 1938). See especially the latter's "A Theory of Good or Value," Chap. XII. I find Joad's position stronger because Stace's attempted empirical deduction of "ought" is unconvincing.

sense lying is always wrong. But—to take the stock illustration of saving the life of an innocent person from a would-be assassin—is the making of a false statement in such a case with intent to misinform (I do not say, *deceive*, because that already suggests a legitimate claim on truth) a lie? As to the letter, yes; as to the spirit, no. The retort that this is only a sophistical dodge by which any wrong act can be made “right” by the questionable method of redefining the alleged wrong so that the proposed act is excluded, is not, in my opinion valid. The nature of anything, it will be said, cannot be changed by definition. True, but what is involved is precisely the “nature of lying.” Is this not something more subtle, involving all the complexities of personal relationships, of good will, and mutual respect, which no mechanically exact definition that centers on the fact of “making false statements” alone, adequately expresses?

It is true, no doubt, that sometimes duties of this sort (entirely apart from the practical dangers of laxity) involve a regrettable compromise with an ideal standard. But might it not be said that in an evil world a loyalty to the ideal “best” frequently compels moral acquiescence in a “best, under the circumstances”? The lie that is wrong always involves an element of personal disloyalty. This is, somehow, the universal element in the ideal of truthfulness, which in certain contingencies is *not* violated by an apparent exception. The “exception” contradicts some current definition of the good of truthfulness, not truthfulness itself.⁵¹ Such “exceptions” are only the recognition that the full nature of an ideal good cannot be exhaustively defined, just as the “rules” of good music cannot be exhaustively stated. The existing rules of composition, etc., suggest the general schema of a good symphony, but the actual creative elaboration of the symphony discloses new formal possibilities. Strictly speaking, the original rules are not contradicted. They are seen to be one specific application of the “spirit” of aesthetic goodness. It appears, then, that the letter is never adequate to the spirit, because the letter as a formulated rule, no matter how carefully qualified, remains a *sum of par-*

⁵¹ It should also be noted, as S. Alexander says, that in these cases the exception “is not made by the individual in his own favor but impersonally” (*Space, Time and Deity* [London, 1920], Vol. II, p. 276).

ticulars, while the spirit is a universal.⁵² It is for this reason that there is a constant, reciprocal interplay between moral experience and moral insight. Each new experience yields new insight, which in turn suggests new opportunities of action in behalf of the good.

Kant did not entirely overlook this function of experience, but its full import he did not adequately realize. Thus in the *Preface* to the *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals* he states, "No doubt these [moral] laws require a judgment sharpened by experience, in order on the one hand to distinguish in what cases they are applicable, and on the other to procure for them access to the will of man, and effectual influence on conduct."⁵³ Elsewhere he says, "[Examples] put beyond doubt the feasibility of what the law commands, they make visible that which the practical rule expresses more generally."⁵⁴ Hence for Kant a particular circumstance involves only a *deductive* subsumption under a universal rule; whereas the above account considers the circumstance the occasion for an *inductive* intuition of universal value. Thus "new occasions teach new duties." Both processes are present in moral action but their functions are different: the former enlarges the extension of moral meaning, the latter deepens its intension.

Now both this extensive and intensive advance of moral concepts belong to the dialectic movement of the ideal, but of the two, the intensive development as above described is the more fundamental. The difference between them is that of creative discovery as compared with new application. It is because there is always more in the ideal good than we were at first led to suspect that the "ought," as I have said, cannot be kept commensurate with the "can." As Professor Bowman says, "In morality, as in personal existence, there is an ideal element—something which, when the limit of attainment has been reached, still leaves us face to face with a mass of unrealized possibilities."⁵⁵ Thus it is that the moral ideal makes demands upon us that we cannot fulfill, and yet, strange as it may seem, we cannot in our calm moments repudiate the obligation though we are impotent to fulfill it.

⁵² This is why a government of laws can never supplant a government of men. The creative administration of judicial law requires the insight of the living mind; otherwise justice defeats equity.

⁵³ A., p. 4.

⁵⁴ A., p. 25.

⁵⁵ *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 96.

All moral action, as the current debates concerning the "right" and the "good" have served to emphasize, involves a subjective and an objective side. An adequate account of a right action involves both a dutiful action, that is, one issuing from purity of motive and disposition; and a fruitful action, that is, one whose objective intention will actually produce "good" or concrete values (or *would have produced them* had the intention not been frustrated by external and uncontrollable circumstance). There is an obligation attaching to both the subjective and objective side of action. On the subjective side I "ought" to be a person of better character and inward disposition; on the objective side there are more and richer values I "ought" to intend to achieve. In both cases what I "ought" involves forms of goodness which are now possible for me to achieve; forms of goodness, recognized as obligatory, which are beyond my present capacity; and, finally, an intimation of forms of goodness which are as yet undisclosed possibilities, to which I am as yet morally blind. On both the subjective and objective sides, the ideal involves impossibilities.⁶⁶ Either these ideals are impossible for me because I do not know what they are; or they are impossible because, knowing what they are, I have no capacity to act on them. The stages of this dialectical advance, therefore, would seem to be: (1) the "good" which the natural man "ought" to attain in view of the "realities" of human nature (naturalism), (2) the good which the ethicized man "ought" to attain in terms of an idealized human nature (utopian humanism), (3) the good which the spiritualized man "ought" to attain in terms of "reborn" human nature (eternal life). The last phase is religious.⁶⁷ The good is seen to be a suprahuman "beauty of holiness" whose realized "presence" evokes the act of worship and adoration and in comparison with which "all our righteousness is as filthy rags."

On what grounds, it will be asked, can it be urged that such a perfectionism is morally relevant? Can a man have duties which he cannot perform? The answer, I think, is that he can. Ideals are universals. Therefore, though characterized, in many cases, by a *prima facie* impossibility, they are none the less continuous with the universals disclosed in the simplest beginnings of moral ex-

⁶⁶ cf. R. Niebuhr, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics* (New York, 1935), Chap. iv, "The Relevance of an Impossible Ethical Ideal."

⁶⁷ cf. Taylor, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, Chaps. VIII-IX.

perience, and so never cease to have relevance. For to be committed to a universal principle is to be committed to whatever is subsumed under it, including the "unknown" and "impossible" instances.

IV

Having thus shown how the "ought" passes through a dialectical development, I wish now to show that there is a corresponding dialectic of the "can." "I ought, therefore I can." The "ought" in this postulate we have seen constantly out-distancing the "can," thus threatening to arrest the advance of moral aspiration with a debilitating complacency. It is difficult not to be at ease in Zion. What is beyond my powers, I protest, is no further concern of mine, for I cannot help being what I am. The argument is technically the denial of the consequent: If I ought, then I can. But I cannot, therefore no obligation exists. Now this situation creates a difficulty for Kant's ethics. Since the rational will is the sovereign legislator of the moral law it clearly cannot prescribe to itself any duty beyond its capacity. Since its moral nature consists precisely in its autonomy, it cannot, without becoming heteronomous, borrow its efficacy from any foreign source. "It is always in everyone's power," Kant asserts, "to satisfy the categorical demands of morality."⁶⁸

It is one of the merits of Kant as a philosopher that he did not blink at disconcerting facts. His ethical writings abound in many shrewd insights into the devious ways of egoism, complacency, pride, and self-deception. He contemplates without illusions the ghastly record of human history. He sees that greed, lust, cruelty, arrogance, and the love of power have everywhere frustrated the dream—which always seems an imminent possibility—of a happy and creative humanity.⁶⁹ He even dares question the favorite prepossession of the Enlightenment: that it stood at the summit of the race's arduous climb to a higher moral and cultural perfection. "This opinion, however," says Kant, "is certainly not founded on experience, if what is meant is *moral* good or evil (not civilization), for the history of all times speaks too powerfully against it, but it is probably the good-natured hypothesis of moralists from Seneca

⁶⁸ A., p. 126.

⁶⁹ cf. the whole section *Man is By Nature Bad* (A., pp. 339-46).

to Rousseau."⁶⁰ The problem of evil, then, exists and the moralist must make what he can of it.⁶¹ But in dealing with the issue of evil, Kant's interpretation of the postulate of practical freedom lands him in an insoluble contradiction which may be exhibited in the following way. The rational will cannot, on the one hand, contradict its essential nature; it must, therefore, consistent with its sovereignty, decline the solicitation to irrational action. Evil, therefore, cannot exist. But evil *does* exist. Since the rational will cannot, however, consistent with its essential nature, expropriate itself of its own sovereignty, it must have *consented* to the solicitation to irrational action. Evil therefore, since it exists, is *radical*. It cannot be attributed to the superior force of sensuous desire, for as a noumenal entity practical reason is outside the realm of empirical causation. We cannot, then, attribute evil to our animal instincts. *The will itself is corrupt*. This is the Kantian version of original sin.

I cannot here undertake to discuss at all adequately the metaphysics of evil, which, on any view, involves appalling difficulties, though I might state my conviction that on any candid review of the subject, something like Kant's notion of a radical evil—if by that is meant a constitutional incapacity both to know the best and to do it—is a fact warranted by moral experience and not only by theological dogma. I wish only to point out that in adopting this doctrine of a “radical evil,” evincing, as I happen to think, a genuinely profound insight in Kant, he himself jeopardizes his crucial and stringent conception of moral autonomy. If the practical reason voluntarily consents to evil, it cannot be said to know rationally the full content of the good, and this is a defect of knowledge. If it does *not* consent, then, though conceivably it may know the good, it is partially impotent to enact it, and this is a defect of power. And in any case, in respect to either or both these defects, the will ceases to be autonomous and requires to be heteronomously supplemented *ab extra*.⁶²

⁶⁰ A., p. 326. Abbott appends an excerpt from Kant's *Das Mag in der Theorie*, u.s.w., 1793, in which he considerably moderated this depreciatory estimate.

⁶¹ It is really surprising how few writers of ethics text-books and treatises consider evil a problem worthy of serious treatment. Even if they profess to be writing of ethical science and not of methodology, one would think evil a datum of first-class theoretical import. Is not the bland indifference to the problem itself a commentary on the problem?

⁶² Kant's attempt to evade this dilemma by his distinction of a noumenal self and an

It is true, of course, that Kant himself did not consider the two conceptions of "radical evil" and "moral autonomy" as inevitable contradictories, for in the *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* he undertakes to demonstrate how the will—though radically evil—may yet regenerate itself by its own internal resources. In this work Kant sets forth his conception of a purely rational and universal religion by extracting from their presumed mythological and historical irrelevancies the rational "Idea" of various Christian dogmas, among them the doctrine of grace. But I think it obvious that for Kant this "grace" is a disturbing and heteronomous factor essentially opposed to morality. Its rôle, therefore, turns out to be subordinate and collateral, not *decisive*, consisting either in the "diminution of the obstacles"⁶³ or in "positive assistance" only *after* man has "previously made himself worthy to receive it and to accept" it.⁶⁴ After a man "has used the original capacity for good so as to become a better man" he may hope that what does not thereafter remain "in his power will be supplied by a higher cooperation,"⁶⁵ which "higher cooperation," however, even in this subordinate rôle, remains "inscrutable"⁶⁶ and, if too greatly stressed, may even become a dangerous source of antinomian indifference.⁶⁷

Now, plainly, the critical juncture in this self-regenerative process is precisely this *initial* overcoming of radical evil whereby the will adopts for its maxim an *absolutely pure* respect for the moral law,⁶⁸ for just at this point "grace" is otiose and, in spite of what Kant says about the "radical" character of evil, the inner essence of the will is in the end conceived to be good, not evil. In other words, the evil is after all only superficial, not radical.

empirical self avails nothing. As Broad says, "I cannot disclaim responsibility for the fact that my noumenal self chose to appear as an empirical self which contains wrong actions rather than as an empirical self which contains nothing but right actions" (*Five Types of Ethical Theory* [New York, 1930], p. 138).

⁶³ A., p. 352.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, p. 353. The notion of making oneself "worthy of grace" is theologically naïve, for, aside from the inadmissible notion of making God our debtor, it is evident that once you are "worthy of grace" you are no longer in need of it.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p. 360.

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, p. 353.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 359f.: "Now reason which is naturally disinclined to moral effort, opposes to this expectation of self-improvement all sorts of corrupt ideas of religion, under the pretext of natural impotence."

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p. 354.

We find, as a matter of fact, that Kant's exposition alternates between these inconsistent points of view. On the one hand, Kant tells us that a man's "disposition in respect of the moral law is never indifferent. . . . Nor can he be partly good and partly bad at the same time."⁶⁹ Furthermore, "this badness is *radical* . . . and at the same time being a natural propensity it cannot be *destroyed* by human powers," for where "the ultimate . . . source of all maxims is corrupt, these [powers] cannot exist."⁷⁰ However, a few lines later this position, since it threatens to imperil the doctrine of moral autonomy, is virtually retracted. We are told that "the depravity of human nature . . . may coexist with a *Will good in general*" while evil arises only from a "*frailty* of human nature, which is not strong enough to follow its adopted principles."⁷¹

Kant was cognizant of the latent contradiction in this position, for he asks, "is not this restoration by one's own strength directly opposed to the thesis of the innate corruption of man for everything good?"⁷² He answers, "undoubtedly, as far as conceivability is concerned."⁷³ Yet, despite such "inconceivability," he reiterates its possibility for the sole reason that he cannot deny or qualify his principle that "if the moral law commands that we *shall* now be better men, it follows inevitably that we also *can* be better."⁷⁴ Thus, in the end, the rationalist in Kant exorcises the ethical empiricist.

But the contradiction remains. On the one hand, this conception of "self-regeneration" certainly seems refuted by social history. The moral phenomena of human life, reflection on which originally led Kant to the conception of a "radical evil," seem plainly inconsistent with this ultimate potency for self-regeneration. If human nature is, in principle, immanently perfectible in this way, it must frankly occasion surprise that the empirical evidence for this remarkable and important capacity is practically non-existent. One would naturally suppose that if, after all, the ultimate essence of the will is good, its noumenal operations ought

⁶⁹ A., pp. 339f.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, p. 344.

⁷¹ *ibid.*, p. 344.

⁷² *ibid.*, p. 358.

⁷³ *ibid.*, p. 358.

⁷⁴ *ibid.*, p. 358.

—with a noticeable frequency at least—to have subjected the phenomenal laws of the flesh to the requirements of ideal duty.

On the other hand, were Kant prepared to adhere consistently to the notion of a "radical evil," *as implying a defect in the noumenal will itself*, then the will's constitutional impotence would preclude the notion of autonomous self-regeneration. "Grace" would have to be something more than a subsequent collaboration granted after it has been well merited. I have previously stated that moral impotence is twofold, arising from defect both of knowledge and of power, and I conclude that neither of these defects can be made good within the limits of Kant's stringent conception of autonomy. With regard to knowledge, as I have in part pointed out, Kant's excessive formalism exhibits the familiar weakness of epistemological rationalism. This is simply that no universal contains within itself a principle of concrete individuation, and so contains no passage from idea to existence. For this reason the moral ideal, as a universal, does not disclose its full meaning *a priori*, but is *revealed through the contingencies of historical existence*. It is this that compels the practical reason to be *receptive* before it can be *prescriptive*, and places it in a position of heteronomous dependence on the "given."

If so, the will's competence to enact the good is even more precariously situated. On Kant's showing, practical reason must owe nothing at all to experience. It must contain within itself the "archetypal image" of perfected humanity, yet, despite this perfect knowledge, it is assumed to have chosen evil. Now in view of the insight which such a universally legislative reason would necessarily possess, it is difficult to reject the supposition that the "subjective spring" of moral action that would arise from a "respect for the law" so clear and so intense would make evil choice quite impossible. However that may be, it seems certain that if even the clearest insight into the solemn majesty of the law does not suffice for doing one's duty, *a fortiori* anything *less* than such maximum insight will but make more intense and more inevitable this fatal impotency. I conclude, therefore, that Kant logically must abandon either his stringent doctrine of autonomy, or his realistic and pessimistic appraisal of the problem of evil.

We are thus brought back to the original paradox involved in Kant's postulate of freedom. Consciousness of duty, it seems, de-

mands that I be free. *Some* autonomy there must be if I am to make good my claim to be a moral agent. My deeds must be mine, not another's, or I am only an automaton moved by an imposed force. On the other hand, the existence of evil reveals a will hopelessly inadequate to the full requirements of duty. I have tried to show that neither Kant's ethics nor his religion furnish the terms for the solution of this paradox. His dual conception of human nature did not permit the suggestion that *an autonomy sufficient to make me a moral person might be reconcilable with a heteronomy sufficient to make my will efficacious*. Now if such a conciliation be possible, then the "I can" can be made adequate to the "I ought." But to adopt such a solution Kant would have to surrender the proud self-sufficiency of the self-legislative will, and with it the "right and elevating" admiration of my own "original moral capacity."⁷⁵

V

Why did he not do so? The answer in part lies in Kant's defective psychology of feeling. With regard to the life of emotion and desire Kant was an egoistic hedonist. All desire is habitually depicted by him as prompted by pathological self-love.⁷⁶ Desires are therefore heteronomous motives. No matter how otherwise admirable, they fatally tempt the pure reason from the cold path of duty for duty's sake alone. Reason should sternly reject their pretension to assist morality or to invest it with any attractive "grace."⁷⁷ Even compassion and sympathy are "annoyances" the good man should wish to be rid of because they corrupt the pure "respect" for duty.⁷⁸ Spontaneous inclination and goodness of heart are dangerous indulgences tending to obscure pure moral vision through moral fanaticism and exaggerated self-conceit.⁷⁹ There is no doubt that Kant is guilty of the charge of representing the doing of one's duty as almost inevitably disagreeable. Scattered passages that mitigate this charge do not dispel the general impression.⁸⁰ It is, as

⁷⁵ cf. A., p. 135.

⁷⁶ See *ibid.*, p. 30n. By "taking interest" Kant means reason's cold and passionless decision to do its duty.

⁷⁷ See Kant's reply to Schiller's criticisms on this point (*ibid.*, p. 330).

⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p. 214.

⁷⁹ *ibid.*, p. 178.

⁸⁰ cf., *ibid.*, p. 331, where Kant admits that a "slavish spirit" indicates secret hatred of the law, and commends doing one's duty "with cheerfulness of heart." cf. also

a matter of fact, logically involved in his hedonistic psychology of emotion, though it should be noted that Kant's own ethical attitude is in this respect superior to his theory.⁸¹

Kant made some progress toward a more adequate theory of the emotions in his *Critique of Judgment*. Much that he there sets forth in favor of the objectivity of aesthetic values could have been fruitfully applied to moral values. But in saying this we are only lecturing Kant for not being wise before the event. It is true, both Plato's *Symposium* and the analogous, though significantly different, Christian conception of *ἀγάπη* were available to him, but to the eighteenth century all this was "mysticism" and not axiology. Nor are we today in a much better state, since there is no subject which can evoke such fundamental disagreements among philosophers as the theory of value. I cannot therefore claim to point out conclusively the *solution* of Kant's paradox. But it is possible to show, I believe, that one school of thought in this subject brings us within sight of such a solution. It can show, in other words, how to conciliate heteronomy and autonomy in the life of a moral person; which is, in my opinion, the crucial qualification of a satisfactory theory of value. Since, moreover, it is the lot of those who would

"Fix fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute"
to find

". . . no end in wandering mazes lost."

I shall economize the discussion by availing myself of Laird's pertinent conclusions in *The Idea of Value*.

Laird finds, after an exhaustive review of the field, that all theories of value reduce to three forms, the elective, the appreciative, and the timological. The elective theory is the broadest in scope (Laird is willing to apply it to the ocean's attraction for the moon) and—limiting it to conscious life—is the simple fact of availing one's self of anything "important,"⁸² regardless of whether the object elected excites any feelings, or whether it possesses absolute or only relative value. The appreciative theory finds value

Webb's remarks on Kant's phrase, *das Gut auch lieb gewonnen* (Kant's *Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 98-9).

⁸¹ Here again the "spirit" of the man, if not the "letter" of his writings, hardly warrants the extreme statement of Schopenhauer that Kant's ethics are the "apothecosis of lovelessness" (*op. cit.*, p. 49).

⁸² cf. Whitehead, *Modes of Thought* (New York, 1938), Lecture I.

in the psychological emotions of attraction and delight. For it, primary value is always a state of consciousness and nothing else. The timological theory holds values to be objective: they await discovery, but they need not be prized or felt. These distinctions introduce a systematic ambiguity into the term value. For the elective theory values are ethically and emotionally neutral; for the appreciative theory values always have positive hedonic quality; for the timological theory values have intrinsic and objective excellence. In ethical discussion the timological view is the controlling factor, for it pronounces with intuitive certainty (in the case of the moral "expert") both that some elections are more excellent than others, and also that appreciative electing is more excellent than unappreciative electing. This double pronouncement is what produces what Laird calls that "inexpugnable intimacy between [subjective] prizing and [timological] value" that seems to be a "formidable barrier in the way of all objective theories of excellence." After all, he asks, if value is indubitably present in some cases and not in others, regardless of whether we emotionally appreciate it, "how comes it that this character is something which stirs our pulses, arouses our loyalties, determines our duties?"⁸³

Laird's answer is, I think, the best that can be given, which is in substance the answer Plato gives us in the *Symposium* and which, with an important difference, Christianity gives us in its conception of God's relation to man. Such an ultimate connection between subjective appreciation and objective excellence could not subsist between entities that were absolutely *different*.⁸⁴ "Therefore," Laird concludes, "there must be a certain affinity or natural propinquity between objective values and the human soul," for "is it not possible to maintain that all excellent things have a certain rapport and elective affinity with one another, and that our minds themselves have a measure of excellence?"⁸⁵ Such a view, I believe, has much to commend it, and would, of course, dispose of Kant's notion that all love is pathological, and that to act from the motive of love is to surrender one's moral autonomy.

⁸³ *op. cit.*, pp. 31f.

⁸⁴ *ibid.*, p. 317.

⁸⁵ *ibid.*, p. 317.

Let us now apply this theory to the problem of imparting efficacy to an impotent will. This "elective affinity for excellence" remains a mere inactive potentiality in man until it is touched into life by being brought into rapport with some higher excellence, and —to pass at once to the maximum case—eventually with the highest excellence, the Holy. But this energizing of the soul will not take place unless previously an active or "potent" excellence *takes the initiative*⁸⁶ with reference to this inactive potentiality, just as a non-magnetic piece of iron will not acquire magnetism until it is induced by propinquity to an active magnet. Now what is that which takes the initiative in this way? It is love, or to give it a distinctively Christian name—grace.⁸⁷ This love is not merely, as St. Paul states, something that is kind, that enviieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. Much more distinctively it is what *seeketh not its own*, taketh no account of evil, rejoiceth not in unrighteousness but rejoiceth in the truth. This love is $\alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\eta$, not $\epsilon\rho\omega\varsigma$ or pathological love. It is not only objective and unbiased, it is absolutely self-forgetful and extraverted. It goes out in creative eagerness to attract what is in itself unlovely and unworthy.⁸⁸ Nay, it can even love its enemies, not waiting to love until it has first been loved. It is this searching initiative of the divine love as contrasted with the passively conceived Platonic "beauty absolute" that marks the great divide between Platonism and Christianity.

In such a conception alone, I am convinced, may we find the solution for the embarrassment that constantly overtakes Kant's postulate of freedom. For *love is a heteronomous influence that does no prejudice to our moral autonomy*. I may be wholly overwhelmed by it, but all the more I am liberated by it. I acquire, without my having *done anything*, and therefore wholly "without merit or worthiness on my part," a power of free and joyful response and of loyal commitment, that "but for this grace" would have been beyond my reach. The loved one is forever beholden, and forever free. Love is a "power," but its power is thoroughly personal and

⁸⁶ cf. Taylor, *op. cit.*, Bk. I, Chap. vi, "The Initiative of the Eternal."

⁸⁷ $\alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\eta$ is the term used in 1 Cor. xiii.

⁸⁸ A fresh and penetrating discussion of the moral implications of Christian love from the standpoint of philosophical ethics is found in L. A. Reid, *Creative Morality* (London, 1937).

never mechanical.⁸⁹ He who acts justly, benevolently, and with "timological insight" acts in "love." If, in addition, this love takes the initiative, eagerly and with self-effacing abandonment bestowing itself upon what does not "deserve it," it approaches Christian *ἀγάπη*. This kind of love, when wholly free from pride and selfishness, is the love which is the "fulfillment of the law" according to Christian teaching. Thus does a morality of love transcend, while it absorbs, a Kantian morality of objective duty. To become capable of it, constitutes not only our personal perfection, but is the very "power" that *imparts that capability to others*. Human love *has*, in its degree, this regenerative influence.⁹⁰ And if the God of theistic religion be real, such Divine *ἀγάπη* would then be the ultimate source of man's spiritual progress. Christianity's view that "no man is free until he is wholly surrendered to God" does not, then, sound like stark nonsense. And, as a matter of fact, it *solves* Kant's paradox, but in a peculiar way. For "moral autonomy" appears to be not so much a substantive *fact*, as a *claim* we make with the hope that it may be realizable. As A. A. Bowman has trenchantly remarked: "There is therefore a certain incommensurateness between the claim that men everywhere make for themselves, and their ability to substantiate that claim by individual conformity to the condition implied in unqualified personality. It is in this sense that the question before us is a question of right. No man has a right of *his own* to believe himself a person to the extent to which he actually does so. And yet the claim cannot be relinquished, without consequences which would prove disastrous, not to religion alone, but to the whole organized life of humanity, to science, art, morality, civilization."⁹¹

I should not agree with those philosophers who view Kant's philosophy of religion as irrelevant to his ethics, a mere relic of "Hebrew old clothes." Any theory of ethics, it seems to me, that accepts both the categorical imperative and the moral autonomy of man is driven by the inner logic of these two facts to seek a religious solution of the problem of morality. The principle

⁸⁹ T. V. Smith's identification of God with a mechanically conceived "power" (*op. cit.*) shows, to say the least, a surprising lack of knowledge about the Christian religion.

⁹⁰ William James spoke of "the expulsive power of a great affection."

⁹¹ *Studies in the Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. II, p. 397. It will be remembered that "to be a person" means for Bowman to be one "who can act in the fullest sense of the term" (*ibid.*, p. 104).

weakness in Kant is not that he sought a religious solution, but that he could not, in keeping with his critical principles, do justice to the historical side of man's life, and, in consequence, to the historical element in religion; for historical experience is precisely the realm of the *personal*, and therefore of the "given," the "revealed," the unpredictably contingent. Kant's God could only be our good example, and the most that he could "do" was to act "noumenally" as the cosmic paymaster who supplied a somewhat supernumerary grace and awarded happiness in meticulous proportion to our self-attained merits. His phenomenal world and noumenal world had no intelligible organic connections, and this defect condemned both Kant's ethics and his religion to a form of legalism that could do justice neither to humanism nor to Christianity.

X

PURPOSE, NATURE, AND THE MORAL LAW

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PURPOSE, NATURE, AND THE MORAL LAW

ALTHOUGH there is, according to Kant, an "immeasurable gulf" between "the sensible realm of the concept of nature" and "the supersensible realm of the concept of freedom," there exists a "ground" which "makes possible the transition from the mode of thought according to the principles of the one to that according to the principles of the other."¹ It is one of the chief functions of the *Critique of Judgment* to analyze the concept of this ground, and the point from which it begins is the belief that, since "the concept of freedom is meant to actualize in the world of sense the purpose proposed by its laws . . . consequently nature must be so thought that the conformity to laws of its form at least harmonizes with the possibility of the purposes to be effected in it according to laws of freedom."²

Now it is essential to a right understanding of the whole third *Critique* that this starting point be correctly understood and nothing seems more plausible at first sight than to take it to mean (i), that there are certain ends, or "moral purposes," which we ought to aim at realizing, and (ii), that nature is such that these ends can be attained. The difficulty, however, is that it is quite impossible to accept the second of these propositions as expressing Kant's meaning and that it is possible to accept the first only in a specially defined sense. We shall begin, therefore, by pointing out what the objections to the second proposition are; we shall then show, by clearing up what Kant meant by the purposes of freedom, in what limited sense the first proposition can be accepted; and finally we shall suggest an alternative interpretation of the passage.

I

It is possible, if nature itself has been produced by design, that it harmonizes with our moral purposes, though this does not necessarily follow, since it may have been produced for some other end.

¹ Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, tr. by J. H. Bernard (London, 1931), p. 14. All subsequent references to the third *Critique* are to this edition.

² *ibid.*, p. 13.

But if it is not a purposive system at all, such a harmony seems out of the question. Now it must be admitted that there is some evidence that Kant believed the whole world in all its detail to constitute a single purposive system designed by an intelligent cause.³ A more important question, however, is not what Kant believed, but whether, with the means at his disposal, it can be proved that the world is such a system.

It is not difficult to show that this is impossible. Kant can, and indeed does, show that parts of the world are purposive, but in neither of the two senses in which this is true would it be valid to infer that the world as a whole is purposive.

(i) What Kant meant by external purposiveness is quite clear: If anything can be shown to have been produced by design, whatever is indispensable to that thing's existence is called externally purposive.⁴ This is entirely straightforward as far as it goes; but the desired conclusion about the purposiveness of the world as a whole only follows if it could be shown, first, that men with their propensities to morality were produced by design; and, second, that the existence of the world in all its detail is necessary to the existence of these moral beings. Since neither of these propositions is self-evident, it is necessary to ask whether any evidence for them exists.

This takes us beyond the concept of external purposiveness to (ii), the concept of objective purposiveness, which is the concept of organism. Now it is a fact, which is empirically verifiable, that organisms exist and that the human body is an organism. If, therefore, it could be shown that the kind of purposiveness which an organism displays is designed, and that the existence of the rest of (unorganized) nature is indispensable to the existence of organisms, the desired conclusion about the purposiveness of the whole world would follow,⁵ though it would still be necessary to

³ See, for instance, the passage in which he says that we must regard the world as *ein nach Zwecken zusammenhängenden Ganzen* (cf. *ibid.*, p. 372); and the very frequent use of the expression *Weltursache*.

⁴ cf. *ibid.*, pp. 271, 282ff.

⁵ Kant sometimes writes (cf., for instance, *ibid.*, pp. 296-7) as if the world as a whole were a single organism. If this were the case, the support of the argument from external purposiveness would not be required, since the desired conclusion would follow as soon as it was established that objective purposiveness requires an intelligent cause. But, of course, as Kant himself usually recognized, what we actually find in nature are

show that this purposiveness of the natural world harmonizes with our moral aims.

Thus everything depends on being able to argue that the existence of the objective purposiveness of organisms is evidence of design. Now it is the validity of just this inference that Kant himself emphatically and repeatedly denies, and there is no doubt that this denial is the only position consistent with his general critical position. In one passage, for instance, Kant raises the specific question, whether the existence of purposive connections in nature *proves* a particular kind of causality. His reply is that it does not, for we cannot say whether in the end this purposive causality may not be similar to that called mechanism. In cases where we find it impossible to explain the possibility of things mechanically, we should make trial whether a subjective principle of explanation will not be useful. This subjective principle is the principle of art, i.e. of a causality according to ideas, and is ascribed to nature by analogy. This expedient is successful in many cases, but in some it seems actually to mislead us.⁶

In a later discussion this is carried even further. Certain objects (organisms) exist, whose possibility we cannot conceive unless we accept certain "teleological" principles in addition to ordinary "scientific," or mechanical, ones. The latter alone *may* in point of fact be sufficient for explaining these things, but the only course open *to us* is to make use of both kinds of principles, hoping that this makeshift procedure will not get us into difficulties on account of their apparent opposition. The justification for this hope lies in the possibility that these two apparently conflicting types of causality may somehow be united in a supersensible ground.⁷

The subjective validity which Kant here assigns to the concept of purposive causality has not always been understood and therefore requires a brief analysis. There are in fact two different, though connected, senses in which the concept of purposive causality as applied to the cognition of physical nature must be understood. In the first sense, in which it applies to nature as a whole, it is genuinely subjective, since it is a merely methodological

both organisms and mechanisms; and so long as this is the case we are not justified in inferring that the *Naturganze* is a purposive system.

⁶ cf. *ibid.*, p. 299.

⁷ cf. *ibid.*, pp. 33off.

assumption which involves no assertion about the actual constitution of things. In the second sense it is no more and no less subjective than are the categories of the understanding. It is constitutive of experience, as they are; but it is limited to the cognition of organisms and is therefore not constitutive of experience as a whole. Kant's whole exposition is seriously confused by the fact that he does not clearly distinguish these two senses. He rightly regards them both as uses of the reflective judgment but he does not see that it is only in the first sense that the reflective judgment is regulative.

(i) Let us begin by noting an important distinction between the determinant judgment and the reflective judgment. In the former a particular is subsumed under a given universal; in the latter only the particular is given, and the universal has to be found with the aid of the particular.⁸ This explains why Kant thought that it is the function of the reflective judgment to serve as a guiding thread for our investigations of the detail of nature. For it is precisely in regard to the detail of nature that no universals are given. We can be certain, that is to say, about the agreement of nature with the great general principles which underlie the natural sciences, since it is we (i.e. our understanding) who give these principles to nature. But the harmony which we are constantly discovering between the detail of nature and our cognitive faculties is not thus assured by the deduction in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Nevertheless it is just on this harmony in detail that the continued progress of the natural sciences depends, and it must, therefore, be assumed, if it cannot be proved, to be thoroughgoing. The natural scientist, in a word, is bound to make a methodological assumption to the effect that nothing happens in nature by chance.

Thus, without the principle of natural causality, or "the universal physical principle," as Kant calls it here, "we should have no experience at all"; while without the principle of purposive causality "we should have no guiding thread," on which depends the development of an organized and coherent body of natural knowledge.⁹ In other words, just as the former principle is "underwritten" by the possibility of experience as such, the latter is

⁸ cf. *Critique of Judgment*, pp. 18-19.

⁹ cf. *ibid.*, p. 281.

underwritten by the possibility of the progress of science. But in thus emphasizing the basic similarity of function of these two principles, we should not overlook the important differences between them. Since it is obviously impossible to have the experience of there being no experience, the physical principle is absolutely necessary. But there is nothing logically impossible about a state of affairs in which science could make no further progress. "If we were told that a deeper or wider knowledge of nature derived from observation must lead at last to a variety of laws which no human understanding could reduce to a principle, we should at once acquiesce."¹⁰

This difference between what we may call the categorical necessity of the physical principle and the merely conditional necessity of the purposive principle corresponds precisely to the difference, already pointed out, between the determinant and the reflective judgment. We certainly do not assume that the *Naturganze* has actually been purposively caused; on the contrary, the systematic character we ascribe to it is an hypothesis on which our actual procedure in the investigation of nature is based. And this regulative, or methodological, use of the reflective judgment, it should be observed, holds only for the cognition of the detail of nature generally.

(ii) In the cognition of those parts of nature which we call organisms judgment is reflective, but not merely regulative. This difference depends on the character of the objects judged about. The *Naturganze* as a systematic whole is not an actual existent fact; it is only a pious hope and can be cognized, therefore, only under a form of the reflective judgment which involves the assumption that it exists in this character. Organisms, however, are empirical facts and require to be cognized as such. For such a complicated structure as they present the cognitive scheme of the categories is not sufficient and there is required the further concept of purposiveness. Thus, as regards the cognition of organisms the principle of purposive causality is not a regulative maxim: it is constitutive of our experience of objects having this kind of structure. It has, in fact, precisely the same function as the categories, except that it is not required where the objects cognized have a simpler structure.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 29.

This function consists in the ordering of a sensuous manifold. In accordance with the category of causality, for example, we judge that a certain relation of sequence in time holds between the various elements in a manifold. All such elements, without exception, are ordered in this way, but we can also observe between certain elements more complicated temporal relations in virtue of which these elements form what we call organisms. And in the cognition of these patterns the principle of purposive causality is not substituted for the principle of natural causality; it is subsidiary to that principle.

The principle of purposive causality thus no more asserts the existence of an actual intelligent cause than the principle of natural causality asserts the existence of a spontaneous force or power. The one has been "purged" of its teleological significance, as the other has been of its metaphysical significance; and what is left in both cases is the *description* of a kind of order in which events occur. Thus, the kind of order which the events constituting an organism have is describable only on analogy with the kind of order which we find in events which we know to have been worked out according to a plan, e.g. some product of human skill. But the fact that we are under the necessity of thinking of organisms *as if* they had been purposively produced is quite different, obviously, from the claim that they have actually been thus produced.¹¹

Thus, although the concept of purposive causality is not *a priori*, that is, although it is not legislative as are the categories of the understanding, it is necessary in its own field, i.e. for cognition of organisms. We can say *a priori* of any event in nature that it is both a cause and an effect, that is, that it has a determinate place in the time series, but we can never know whether any particular event is cognized under the concept of purposive causality until empirical study shows whether it is a part of an organism. But within these limits purposive causality is just as much a constitutive principle as is any of the categories.

¹¹ An art critic, for instance, may say that a certain picture is "a Crucifixion in the style of Tintoretto," and intend this expression simply as a description which will serve to convey, even to a person who has never seen that particular picture, a perfectly definite idea of the style of drawing and of composition in which it was composed, without making any assertion at all about the actual authorship of the canvas. It is in this purely descriptive sense that the concept of *Zweckmässigkeit ohne Zweck* must be understood.

It follows from this genuine, even if limited, necessity that the concept of purposive causality is not capable of giving any information about a possible supra-rational realm. Objectivity, in a word, is won at the cost of inevitable restriction to the sphere of phenomena. Thus, if, on the one hand, the concept of purposive causality (as applied to the cognition of organisms) has a genuinely objective validity which contrasts with the merely subjective, or regulative, validity it has as applied to the *Naturganze*; so, on the other hand, this objectivity is limited strictly to the cognition of a certain complicated kind of empirical order and definitely excludes the assertion of an intelligence outside the realm of phenomena but nonetheless the author of the order it displays. This follows from the fact that purposiveness is a concept constitutive for organisms, just as the fact that causality is a relation which holds between phenomena only and which therefore throws no light on an extra-phenomenal causal activity follows from the fact that it is a category constitutive of experience as such.

But if it cannot be established that organisms are actually purposively produced, the question whether nature as a whole is necessary to the existence of human beings need not even be raised. And as a matter of fact it has appeared in the course of the discussion that nature as a whole can be called purposive only in the limited sense that the progress of science depends on a methodological assumption that nothing in nature happens by chance. Hence, if the interpretation proposed for the passage quoted at the beginning be correct, it must be allowed, not only that Kant has not succeeded in proving that nature as a whole is purposive in the sense of being designed to make possible the realization of our moral aims, but that the whole critical procedure of the *Critique* is actually incompatible with the possibility of such a proof.

II

We must now ask what the purposes proposed by freedom are. The very concept of a "moral" purpose may appear, at first sight, to conflict with the fundamental principles of morality set out in the *Grundlegung*,¹² but this difficulty is only apparent. For the

¹² Kant says, for instance, that "an action done from a sense of duty derives its moral worth, *not from the purpose* which is to be attained by it . . . and therefore does not

only kind of purpose which, according to the terminology of this *Critique*, is specifically moral is the *Endzweck*, and since this final end is not a means to anything else (as all other ends are), it is easy to show that the acts directed towards producing it are precisely those which, according to the *Grundlegung*, are morally good.¹³

That "rational beings under the moral law"¹⁴ are the final end of all creation is a conclusion to which Kant thought even "the commonest understanding" would give consent. Without man the whole of nature would be a waste and "in vain." But it is not merely as a natural object (*Naturglied*) that he is the *final* end, for what worth he has in this respect is conditioned on his animal nature and is bestowed on him by his environment. What gives man absolute worth and thereby fits him to be the final end he owes to the value reason has—to the specifically moral value he acquires by living up to his character as a rational being. Of man so far as he is moral the question "Why (*Quem in finem*) he exists?" is therefore meaningless. This is implied in the very meaning of morality.

Thus the acts which aim at the final end are just those in which, according to the *Grundlegung*, we are moved by a sense of duty, i.e. by no other motive than respect for the moral law. Such acts are unconditionally and categorically commanded just because the end is final, i.e. just because morality has a value so great that it is aimed at as an end in itself, not merely as a means to something else. And since the notion of aiming at the *Endzweck* thus furnishes an alternative description of morally good action, it is not unreasonable to expect it to throw some light on the obscure and difficult notion that the good will is determined by "nothing else than the conception of law in itself."¹⁵

depend on the realization of the object of the action." (*Kant's Theory of Ethics*, tr. by T. K. Abbott [London, 1927], p. 16. All subsequent references to the *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals* are to this edition.)

¹³ As regards the expression, "moral purposes," it may be noted that in the original the noun is missing, and that Bernard (p. 388) has apparently assumed that the word, *Zweck*, which occurs earlier in the sentence, is intended. But Vorländer, after commenting on the omission of the noun, adds that "Erdman vermutet wohl mit Recht Endzwecks." Bück (in the Cassirer edition) seems to accept this interpretation, which agrees entirely with what (from the point of view being argued here) Kant should mean.

¹⁴ *Critique of Judgment*, p. 360.

¹⁵ *Fundamental Principles*, p. 17.

It should be observed, to begin with, that the most striking characteristic of rational behavior is that it is purposive. What distinguishes an act of will as a cause is simply the fact that it is the representation of its effect. "The will, regarded as the faculty of desire, is . . . one of the many natural causes in the world, viz. that cause which acts in accordance with concepts."¹⁶ This is why we can define action, generally, as *practical* reason; here reason does not merely contemplate a certain state of affairs but causes the occurrence of that state. We can now define the good will as *pure* practical reason;¹⁷ for the good will, reason is itself the end. The distinction Kant has in mind is this: Action in the strict sense is distinguished from mere behavior by the fact that we act according to a plan; that is, we *act*, if we do *A*, because we want *B* and because we know that *A* is the cause of *B*. Here reason is not an end; it is an instrument which is of use in finding out what the various laws of nature are which will get us what we want.¹⁸ On the other hand, in action which has moral worth reason is itself the end for the sake of which we act.

What distinguishes morally good action from other action, therefore, is not that it is not purposive (for in such a case it would simply be amoral, like the behavior of animals), but the fact that its purpose, as the realization of the *Endzweck*, is unconditional. Thus, by the categorical character which he attributes to morally good action Kant means simply the finality of the specifically moral end. The worth of reason is not conditional as is the value of all other ends (e.g. happiness) on the presence in us of bodily needs or sensuous appetites. Its worth is *a priori*: reason is unconditionally an end because in aiming at it a rational being is but living up to his own "end and destiny" as a rational creature.

Of the three formulations Kant gives of this categorical imperative the clearest is perhaps the second: "So act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of any other, in every case as an end without, never as a means only."¹⁹ Its "foundation," as Kant rightly sees, lies in the fact that "rational nature

¹⁶ *Critique of Judgment*, p. 8.

¹⁷ cf., for instance, *Fundamental Principles*, pp. 4, 12, 59, 80, note 1.

¹⁸ cf.: "Rational beings alone have the faculty of acting according to the conception of laws, that is according to principles, i.e. have a *will*" (*ibid.*, p. 29).

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 47.

exists as an end in itself." We are now, moreover, in a position to add a fourth formulation, viz. *Aim at the final end*. In any case, what is expressed is simply the notion that human beings, just because they are rational, possess an "absolute worth." Hence the description in the *Grundlegung* of morally good action as action "*aus Achtung fürs Gesetz*"²⁰ means simply being moved by respect for ourselves as rational beings.

None of these formulations of the moral imperative gives any information in detail about the nature of the acts, the doing of which would realize the final end. For this reason some people have criticized Kant's view as abstract and formal, and those who believe that Kant tried to deduce a specific set of duties from the "bare conception of law as such" have rightly declared that this is impossible. But the fact is that these criticisms are based upon a misconception of Kant's aim. It was never his intention to give a simple and self-evident formula from which all our duties could be deduced in detail. The formula was intended to give an entirely generalized statement of the characteristic common to all the different kinds of acts which have moral worth; and "whoever knows of what importance to a mathematician a formula is" will not hold that work of this sort is "insignificant or useless."²¹

Ultimately no reason can be given why certain types of acts, like truth telling or promise keeping, realize the final end, while others do not. In the end "common human understanding" and philosophic inquiry alike have to accept what is found in our moral consciousness. But Kant did not regard this as a difficulty since he was convinced that all decent people really do agree at heart about what they ought to do. The only difference between the plain man and the philosopher is that where the former feels vaguely that he is bound to tell the truth and keep promises, the latter sees more clearly their essential nature. He sees that these acts are somehow fitting and appropriate for rational beings to do, i.e. he sees that in doing them we fulfil our end and destiny as rational creatures. Thus the various formulae of the categorical imperative simply state the general character of all particular duties. What I aim at is naturally always some specific thing, e.g. to tell the truth now; but what gives this or any other act moral

²⁰ cf. *Fundamental Principles*, p. 16.

²¹ *ibid.*, p. 93, note 1.

worth is the fact that the doing of it, by fulfilling my rational nature, promotes the final end.

Now it is perfectly clear that the "moral" purpose, thus understood, does not require the existence of nature as a purposive system. For the final end is nothing but what we find when we "look within"—it is a realm of value which *ought* to exist, but to which the question whether the phenomenal world is or is not purposively caused is entirely irrelevant. "It may be that all that *has happened* in the course of nature . . . *ought not to have happened*."²² This is quite possible, since "when we have the course of nature alone in view, *ought* has no meaning whatsoever."²³ But it is just as true, on the other hand, that when we have the "ought" alone in view, the determinism of the physical world has no meaning whatsoever. In other words, the actual existential status of moral value (of what ought to be) has no bearing on the reality of its value; and it is just because this is the case that morality is not a "vain and chimerical illusion."

III

We may now return to the passage already referred to as defining the function of the third *Critique*.²⁴ It is now apparent that the interpretation suggested at the outset cannot be correct, for it has become clear not only that Kant cannot show that nature harmonizes with our moral end but that there is no need to try to prove that it does, since the reality of this end does not at all depend on our being able to realize it in physical nature. It seems indeed as if the notion that this *Critique* functions as a "mediating link" which "bridges the gulf" between the realm of nature and that of morality is mistaken, if it be taken literally. In fact, since the objective reality of each realm depends precisely on its thoroughgoing independence of the other, Kant's whole position really depends on the existence of this gulf.

Nevertheless it is clear, whatever else the passage may mean, that Kant is here insisting on some kind of connection between the realm of nature and the realm of morality. The problem is to

²² Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. by N. Kemp Smith (London, 1929), p. 474 (A550=B578).

²³ *ibid.*, p. 473 (A547=B575).

²⁴ See above, p. 229.

interpret this assertion in a way which is compatible with Kant's critical position. This can be done if, instead of interpreting the "mediation" literally as involving a conscious and deliberate arrangement to serve a moral end, we recall that purposiveness in the critical sense means *Zweckmässigkeit ohne Zweck*. If the purposiveness of nature is understood to mean the description of a kind of observed order rather than an intelligence at work, we shall find that the "mode of thought" necessary for the cognition of this order does indeed "make possible the transition" from the principles of nature to those of morality. For it appears that this mode of cognition is of the same type as that which is specifically moral. How this is the case must now be shortly explained.

Moral freedom is autonomy. That is, when we act morally we act in conformity with a law which we give ourselves. To put this otherwise, we are free when we act *aus Achtung fürs Gesetz*, because we are self-determined: nothing moves us in such a case except the thought of our own value as rational persons. Hence the expressions, "to act freely," "to act morally," "to be autonomous", "to obey the categorical imperative," are all equivalent to the expression, "to aim at the final end." An act which is free in the moral sense does not have an origin outside the series of events in nature. What Kant tries to describe by words like "freedom" and "spontaneity" is the nature of the thought that moves us in morally good action (the fact, that is, that this is the thought of the final end), rather than an alleged absence of causal antecedents.

Now this characteristic of morally good action, in virtue of which it is called free, is precisely the same as that special relation of parts to whole which exists in an organism and in virtue of which we call it purposive. In other words, the peculiar kind of order which distinguishes organisms from other natural objects is identical with the order which, we find, connects motive and act in morally good action and which distinguishes it from all other action. In each case we can only describe this kind of order as "a free conformity to law," but in neither case is this to be understood as the assertion of an actual noumenal origin. Free spontaneity, like purposiveness, is intended in a descriptive sense.

Thus, in a perfectly genuine, if not the most obvious, sense the concept of purposiveness does "mediate" between morality and nature. For that spontaneity which, according to morality, only

ought to exist, is now seen to be actually realized in nature. It is not, indeed, the case that we have a capacity to originate spontaneously what we ought to do, nor does the reality of morality depend on our having this power. But it is a fact that in organized bodies we find a sensuous and concrete expression of that order which, so far as morality goes, is supersensible. Consequently we do find, after all, that nature (or, rather, that the part of nature which consists in organized bodies) does harmonize, in a sense, with the moral end.

The fact that this is the case does not, of course, constitute a proof of the existence and validity of the moral law. And it may be asked, therefore, what bearing it has on morality. The bearing is this: The pure practicality of reason, as Kant chooses to describe the fact of the morally good will, though it has its own "credential,"²⁵ is not empirically verifiable. A *conceptual* knowledge of that supersensible realm of morality which is disclosed when we "look within" is impossible. For conceptual knowledge is limited to the ordering of an intuited manifold and, since an intuition of the unconditioned would have to be intellectual, while we for our part are confined to sensuous intuitions, it follows that conceptual knowledge is confined to a cognition of objects (i.e. phenomena). As far, therefore, as morality itself goes, "the autonomy of pure practical reason" is "a fact absolutely inexplicable from any data of the sensible world, and the whole compass of our theoretical use of reason."²⁶ This lack of verification, this absence of any way to *conceive* the morally good will, may cause a sceptical attitude towards morality. It is fortunate, therefore, that as a result of Kant's analysis of the purposiveness of organisms we have a way of throwing light indirectly on the nature of morality.

Organisms are objects occurring in the sensible world. They are explicable by the theoretic use of reason. It is, indeed, just the function of the principle of purposive causality to reduce organisms to conceptual terms. Now organisms are not themselves, of course, morally valuable. Nevertheless, what we have in the cognition of organisms is a "free" use of reason, of precisely the kind which, *when it turns practical*, becomes morally valuable. Thus they constitute a kind of reflection in nature of the spontaneous

²⁵ cf., *Fundamental Principles*, p. 137.

²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 132.

activity of reason which, within the noumenal realm, is morally good. And this concrete expression in a realm where conceptual analysis is possible is of the greatest use and importance in explicating the obscure and difficult notion of pure practical reason, since it serves as an illustration, an embodiment in physical nature, of that supersensible moral activity.

XI

AN EXPOSITION OF KANT'S PHILOSOPHY
OF LAW

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AN EXPOSITION OF KANT'S PHILOSOPHY OF LAW

KANT'S legal and political views are contained principally in four treatises. These treatises in the order of their appearance are: (1) *Idea of a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View*,¹ (2) *Concerning the Popular Expression: "That may be true in Theory, but will not do in Practice"*,² (3) *Perpetual Peace, a Philosophical Essay*,³ and (4) *Metaphysical Principles of the Science of Right*.⁴ Of the four, the *Metaphysical Principles of the Science of Right* is the largest, most comprehensive, and above all most systematic. True, many of the ideas expressed therein are expressed in the smaller treatises, some perhaps more convincingly. But in the *Metaphysical Principles of the Science of Right* Kant seeks to discover the fundamental bases of law, both public and private, and to found legal and political institutions thereon. It alone therefore is in the fullest sense a philosophy of law, and hence may be regarded as the culmination of Kant's work

¹ *Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürglicher Absicht* (1784). This treatise is Kant's reply to Rousseau's *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*. While it is essentially an essay in the field of the philosophy of history, it contains in germ many of the legal and political ideas expressed in his later treatises.

² *Über den Gemeinspruch: Das mag in der Theorie richtig sein, taugt aber nicht für die Praxis* (1793). In this treatise Kant's legal and political ideas receive considerable elaboration but by reason of its polemical character we cannot expect to find the systematic development afforded them by the *Metaphysical Principles of the Science of Right*. The work consists of three sections. Section I, a reply to an objection made by Professor Garve to Kant's general theory of morality, deals with the relation between theory and practice in the realm of morals generally; section II, against Hobbes, with the relation between theory and practice in constitutional law; and section III, against Moses Mendelsohn, with the relation between theory and practice in the law of nations.

³ *Zum ewigen Frieden, ein philosophischer Entwurf* (1795). In this treatise Kant deals with the question of international peace and specifies the legal and political conditions which are necessary to its accomplishment. Though the treatment afforded this question is more extensive than that afforded it in the *Metaphysical Principles of the Science of Right*, the treatise is limited generally to the field of international law.

⁴ *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Rechtslehre* (1796-1797). German writers employ the term *Recht*, (1) to designate that which is *lawful* in external action, in the sense that it is in conformity with a law, (2) for the general concept of the *lawful*, and (3) to designate the sum of rules as opposed to *Gesetz*, a single rule. This makes for difficulties in translation.

in the field of law and politics.⁵ Accordingly, without totally ignoring the other treatises, I shall make this treatise the basis of my discussion.

The *Metaphysical Principles of the Science of Right*, commonly referred to as *Rechtslehre*, together with the *Metaphysical Principles of the Science of Virtue*,⁶ serve as parts one and two respectively of the *Metaphysic of Morals*.⁷ The two treatises under their common title were designed by Kant as the sequel to the *Critique of Practical Reason*⁸ and the earlier *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals*.⁹ This fact is brought out in his prefatory explanation to the *Rechtslehre*—which explanation, together with the *General Introduction to the Metaphysic of Morals* which follows, must be regarded as belonging to both parts of the *Metaphysic of Morals*. *The Metaphysic of Morals*, he says, “as constituting the System of Practical Philosophy, was to follow the ‘Critique of Practical Reason’ as it now does.”¹⁰ It is also noteworthy that he regards the two treatises under their common title as forming a counterpart to the *Metaphysical Principles of the Science of Nature*,¹¹ i.e. as bearing the same relationship to the *Critique of Practical Reason* that the *Metaphysical Principles of the Science of Nature* bears to the *Critique of Pure Reason*.¹²

The title, *Metaphysical Principles of the Science of Right*, or, as we find it in the preface, *Metaphysical Principles of Jurisprudence as the Science of Right*, correctly indicates the scope of the treatise, provided that we recognize that the sole object of the “pure science of right”¹³ is the systematic knowledge and exposition of these very principles. For the pure science of right founds itself in reason

⁵ Political theory is regarded by Kant as a branch of law in the sense that he deals with its problems under the head of constitutional law and international law.

⁶ *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Tugendlehre* (1797).

⁷ *Die Metaphysic der Sitten*.

⁸ *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (1788).

⁹ *Grundlegung zur Metaphysic der Sitten* (1785).

¹⁰ *The Philosophy of Law: An Exposition of the Fundamental Principles of Jurisprudence as the Science of Right*, by Immanuel Kant, translated from the German by W. Hastie (Edinburgh, 1887), p. 3. It is to this translation of the *Rechtslehre* that I refer throughout my essay.

¹¹ *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft* (1786).

¹² *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1781.)

¹³ *Philosophy of Law*, p. 43.

alone apart from all experience. Kant feels, accordingly, that the work might be properly designated *Metaphysic of Right*.

He employs the term jurisprudence as equivalent to the science of right because of its long usage in indicating a theoretical or systematic knowledge of law in principle, although in its original sense it meant the practical knowledge of positive law, i.e. the knowledge of the practical jurisconsult or professional lawyer as "one who is skilled in the knowledge of positive external Laws, and who can apply them in cases that may occur in experience."¹⁴ In the strict usage of terms the pure science of right is *Jurisscientia* rather than *Jurisprudentia*.

I. GENERAL POSITION

In the field of law, as elsewhere, Kant mediates between divergent tendencies. Rationalism in whatever field it finds expression stresses principles of reason in opposition to empirical facts. In the field of law, accordingly, it professes a supreme contempt for positive law, which it regards as founded in experience rather than in principles of reason, and sets up in opposition thereto its own system of "rational" law as a system derived deductively from such principles. Reason, the rationalists contend, demands certainty and logical coherence. Rational law alone achieves these, for they can be obtained only by a law which deduces rules from immutable principles. But positive law, dominated in its development by historical and non-rational factors, affords contingent principles only, principles which cover only the situations out of which such principles have arisen.

Empiricism regards rational law as a product of the schools and therefore as divorced from life. The only law it recognizes is positive law, which it likes to think of as having its source in experience and not in *a priori* principles. Schools differ as regards the nature of the empirical factors which have shaped positive law, but all agree in regarding principles as last things, rather than starting-points in positive law. Accordingly, they comb the pages of history to discover the empirical factors, or they attempt to systematize the laws of a particular time and place, or to draw analogies between the laws of one time and place and the laws of another, but

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 43.

they strenuously deny that in such operations they discover or are guided by *a priori* principles.

With rationalism, Kant contends that the basic principles of law cannot be derived from experience. Reason supplies these principles from its own resources. In the field of natural science, he contends, it is quite possible to derive laws from experience by the methods of scientific induction. But this is because our experiences of nature already contain a formal element contributed by the mind through the categories of the understanding. The same is not true in the field of human activities. But whilst discovered independently of experience they must nevertheless be applied to experience, i.e. to the empirical acts and relations which characterize human beings—acts and relations which they do not invent—for they have no other function save to give order and coherence to such acts and relations. Accordingly, Kant would not discard positive legislation provided that such legislation operates within the framework of the principles established by reason.

The positive jurist must "abandon his empirical principles for a time, and search in the pure Reason for the sources of such judgments, in order to lay a real foundation for actual positive Legislation."¹⁵ Empirical laws may well furnish him with excellent guidance, but he does not found his system on such principles, for "a merely empirical system that is void of rational principles is, like the wooden head in the fable of Phaedrus, fine enough in appearance, but unfortunately it wants brain."¹⁶ It would follow that the practical jurist and lawgiver must be a student of the science of right, for it is through the science of right as "the philosophical and systematic knowledge of the *a priori* Principles of Natural Right"¹⁷ that the search in the pure reason is made, and accordingly it is from this science that he must derive "the immutable Principles of all positive Legislation."¹⁸

¹⁵ *Philosophy of Law*, p. 44.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 44.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 43.

¹⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 43f. Kant's point is that while reason works with the data of experience, she is not content with mere comparison of and generalization from the data, but insists on adding an element of her own. Willoughby then misconstrues Kant's meaning, in my estimation, when he accuses him of generating from pure reason both form and subject matter of law. See W. W. Willoughby, *An Examination of the Nature of the State* (New York, 1903), p. 105.

Kant, Hobbes, and Rousseau. Kant develops his legal and political views largely in critical opposition to those of Hobbes and Rousseau. According to Rousseau the natural man is self-sufficient, standing in no need of his fellow creatures by reason of the simplicity of his wants. Having no need for social ties, his life is solitary and in consequence thereof, peaceful and free. Strife and unlimited coercion of individuals by one another enter when, with the increasing complexity of his wants, man begins to associate himself with his fellows. Civil society becomes necessary in order to achieve peace and release from individual coercion. In setting up a civil society men voluntarily forego their individual freedom, for they set up a general will in place of their individual wills. But since the general will is the will of all—for have they not agreed to accept the general will in place of their individual wills?—each one in obeying the general will in effect obeys his own will.¹⁹ Accordingly, Rousseau feels justified in maintaining that individuals in a civil society *should* be as free as in the state of nature, and in fact *would* be were the general will fairly obtained, viz. by summating the independently formed opinions of the members of the commonwealth and cancelling extreme views, its pronouncements to be enforced by king or executive. Certainly they are freer than in the state of strife immediately preceding the establishment of a civil order. Hobbes, too, pictures the natural man as antisocial. But whereas Rousseau regards strife and individual coercion as appearing only when man leaves the state of nature, Hobbes regards them as pertaining inherently to the state of nature itself. In effect, his natural man is *violently* antisocial. Like Rousseau he regards civil society as necessary in order to achieve peace and release from individual coercion, but recognizes that men permanently compromise their freedom of action in setting up such a society. Thus both Hobbes and Rousseau view the natural man as essentially antisocial and his life in the absence of a civil union as either being or becoming one of strife and coercion. Both accordingly regard the State as a necessary development from the conditions of the state of nature. Both also view

¹⁹ The agreement to accept the general will is indeed the will of all, but the general will which they agree to accept is itself not strictly the will of all but at most that of a majority of the electorate. Or it is the will of all collectively but not the will of all distributively as Rousseau apparently claims.

men as voluntarily giving up their natural freedom in setting up such a society, though Rousseau supposes that they regain it through the instrumentality of the general will.

Kant differs from his predecessors in the following essential respects:

(1) Man is by nature both social and antisocial. This is best brought out in his *Idea of a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View*. Rousseau is wrong in picturing the original condition of man as solitary, Hobbes is wrong in picturing it as violent. Man is by nature sociable. At the same time he possesses certain anti-social tendencies. Feeling inclined to live in harmony with his fellows, yet meeting with resistance to his desires on their part, he seeks to outstrip them and to satisfy his natural thirst for possession and power. Far from being evil, however, these unsocial tendencies are a means to his cultural development, for in the course of satisfying them he is forced to give up his indolence and to develop many excellent capacities which he otherwise would never have developed. But only in a civil society do these capacities reach fruition, for it is only in a civil society that there is sufficient protection to permit of their successful development. The unsociableness of man serves as a spur to the development of his powers, but this unsociableness would overreach its mark were there not some restraint placed upon his freedom. Civil society, accordingly, under a system of laws which grants freedom of initiative to the individual, but restrains him from interfering with a like freedom of initiative on the part of others, is necessary if man is to evolve culturally. So Kant expresses his views in his *Idea of a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View*.

(2) Kant regards the state of nature as a rational idea. It is simply man considered as stripped of all that properly belongs to him in virtue of his inclusion in a civil union, and not an historical condition. Hence we find him stressing the *rational* necessity of the State, its justification at the hands of pure reason, rather than the forces or motives which may have brought it to be. Hobbes and Rousseau in viewing the State as a necessary development from the characteristics of the state of nature are indeed attempting to justify the State. Nevertheless, since they are unable to recognize fully the purely theoretical status of the state of nature,

they speak throughout as though the development were an historical one, i.e. as though the State arose through experiencing the disadvantages of the state of nature.

(3) Kant regards man in the state of nature, i.e. apart from the restraints of a civil union, as nevertheless subject to law. This is in accord with what he regards as an entirely new conception of freedom. Kant feels that his predecessors conceived of freedom as license, the unbridled freedom of desire. He, on the contrary, conceives of it as rational, as freedom under the laws of reason. Hence, even apart from the State, man *quâ* rational is not free in the sense that he can do as he pleases but is subject to the laws of reason.

(4) There is then no question of man's foregoing his freedom in entering a civil union. Rather man enters a civil union in order to consummate a freedom which apart from the sanctions of a civil union can at best be provisional only.

The Universal Principle of Right. With the exception of the first, the above differentiating features are derived chiefly from the *Rechtslehre*, to a comprehensive treatment of which I now turn. Man in the state of nature is still under the compulsion of the practical reason and its promulgations. He can do as he pleases in the sense that there is no civil authority to restrain his activities, but he is under the rational necessity of making his outward acts conform to a universal law of reason. Hence, even in a state of nature man is subject to law. This, as indicated above, is in full accord with his freedom. For man's freedom consists in the fact that his will or rational power of choice, which Kant designates the practical reason, is free in the act of choice—free in the negative sense of being free from determination by aught else save reason, but, still more important, free in the positive sense that it is based on principles which the practical reason herself lays down. The practical reason does not secure her principles from any other source save herself. When, then, it is claimed that we are obliged to act in accordance with her principles, we are not gainsaying the will's freedom, but rather asserting it.

Now reason lays down her principles in the form of categorical imperatives, i.e. unconditional commands. The obligatory character of an action, then, is simply its necessity when viewed in rela-

tion to a categorical imperative of reason. All obligatory actions in the above sense of obligation are designated by Kant as "duties." But it is necessary to distinguish between ethical duties and juridical duties (duties of virtue and duties of right). Both refer to actions which are obligatory in the above mentioned sense, but there is nevertheless a distinction in the character of the obligation. For the motivating principle in the instance of duties of virtue is the idea of duty itself. By this we mean that the law is represented reflectively and becomes operative as a maxim or internal motive.²⁰ In short, the obligation is internal. In the instance of the duties of right, however, the law itself need not serve as the internal motive to action. All that is required is that the action conform to the law. In fact, in a strict sense, when the law becomes operative as an internal motive, the duty of right becomes a duty of virtue. Here, then, the obligation is external. Hence for Kant the primary conception in the field of jurisprudence is right, viewed as the mere legality of external acts, i.e. their conformity to law, and not duty.

Starting, then, from man's freedom as a freedom under the laws of reason, we define duties of right as lawful acts of our free-will—acts whose freedom rests on the fact that the law to which they conform is a law of reason—when viewed simply as being in conformity with law. However, a right is not simply an act of free-will with respect to which there is no specific stricture of law, but an act which is founded upon, i.e. which can be subsumed under, a law of reason. It is this fact that gives me the right²¹ to demand that others respect my rights.

Kant feels that all laws of reason stem from a general principle which he designates as "the Universal Principle of Right." He formulates the principle as follows: "'Act externally in such a manner that the free exercise of thy Will may be able to coexist with the Freedom of all others, according to a universal Law.'"²² This principle not only expresses reason's demand for freedom

²⁰ Kant defines a maxim as "the Rule of the Agent or Actor, which he forms as a Principle for himself on subjective grounds" (*Philosophy of Law*, p. 33).

²¹ Strictly, I cannot be said to have a right, but rather to be right in the sense that my action or a relation resulting from my action is right, i.e. in accordance with law. cf. *ibid.*, p. 67.

²² *ibid.*, p. 46.

subject to her own laws, of which this law is one, but if we consider Kant to mean by "a universal Law" a law which specifically, i.e. with respect to specific actions, expresses the harmony of the free exercise of the will of all in action demanded by the general principle, and not the general principle itself, it acquires additional meaning. All acts of my free-will are *right* provided that they can be brought under the universal principle of right, i.e. provided that they can be brought into harmony with the freedom of the will of all in action, in accordance with laws which express such harmony.

Now if my action is *right* in the above mentioned sense, I am *right* in restraining anyone who hinders me in the performance of this action. "If," as Kant puts it, "my action or my condition generally can coexist with the freedom of every other, according to a universal Law, anyone does me a wrong who hinders me in the performance of this action, or in the maintenance of this condition."²³ His exercise of freedom in hindering me is a hindrance not alone of my freedom but of the general freedom of each and all according to universal laws, and hence is wrong as being contrary to the universal principle of right. It follows that I am right in exercising constraint upon such a one for my constraint is *a bindering of a bindrance of freedom*²⁴ and is in accord with the freedom that is according to universal laws, as formulated in the universal principle of right.

Furthermore, the practical reason demands that the external compulsion be reciprocal, for by a reciprocal compulsion is meant a compulsion such as may coexist with the freedom of everyone according to universal laws. I do not possess the *right* to compel another to refrain from hindering me in the performance of actions unless he be able to exert a like pressure on me. The *right* to act and the *right* to compel are accordingly grounded in the same universal principle of right. But it is not required that this principle serve as the maxim of my actions. All that is required is that my actions conform to it. "For anyone," says Kant, "may be free, although his Freedom is entirely indifferent to me, or even if I wished in my heart to infringe it, so long as I do not actually

²³ *ibid.*, p. 46.

²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 47.

violate that freedom by *my external action*.²⁵ I am fulfilling my obligations to the law simply in not violating his freedom by my external actions even though my intention may be quite otherwise, and though it is right for another to compel me to respect his freedom of action, he cannot demand that I purposely conform to the law. Ethics, since it, too, is concerned with external actions and not merely with intentions, "imposes upon me the obligation to make the fulfilment of Right a *maxim* of my conduct."²⁶ But viewed in this light, the purely juridical obligation to act in accordance with the principle of right becomes a conscious obligation, an *ought*, and the right on the part of another to compel me to act in accordance therewith—which is the foundation of my external or juridical duty to obey—becomes a duty of virtue on my part.²⁷

The Rational Necessity of the State. But a difficulty arises. The law of right limits my freedom of action to action that can be brought into harmony with the freedom of the will of each and all in action, in accordance with laws which express such harmony, and it declares only such actions to be right. But if the law of right is not operative as a motivating principle, and if, accordingly, the only way by which I can be forced to limit my action to the prescribed limits is through the compulsion of another, and the only way by which he can be forced to limit his action to the prescribed limits is through my compulsion, what guarantee is there of a universal and equally reciprocal compulsion, i.e. of a compulsion such as may coexist with the freedom of everyone according to universal laws? If my neighbor is weaker than I, what is to prevent my ignoring his right to compel me to respect his rights? And if there is nothing to prevent my ignoring his right to compel

²⁵ *Philosophy of Law*, p. 46.

²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 46.

²⁷ Equity, Kant feels, lies between law and ethics. Its opposition to *strict* right is indicated by the dictum of equity: "The strictest Right is the greatest Wrong" (*ibid.*, p. 52), and by the fact that, "although it relates to a matter of Right" (*ibid.*, p. 52), it is not referable to the forms of Right—which cannot be other than strict (*ibid.*, p. 49). Hence, while it seemingly carries a title to compel, no judge can properly be found to give a decision in cases in equity, necessitating the referring of such cases to a "Court of Conscience" (*ibid.*, p. 52), i.e. to a court which is not properly a court of law. Kant's problem is how to make law strict yet at the same time rational. Not to decide on the basis of strict law is to open the door to selfish interest and sentiment which Kant abhors.

me to respect his rights, then in what sense does the Kantian state of nature differ from that of Hobbes? The answer is that there is no difference in practice, and Kant generally agrees with Hobbes as opposed to Rousseau that the state of nature is one of ceaseless strife and that the only solution to the problem is through the institution of a civil union and thereby securing the individual in his rights.

But we are not to suppose that the State creates such rights. They are determined by reason herself apart from all consideration save her own *a priori* principles. While they are enforceable only in a civil union, far from being determined by that union, they serve as the *raison d'être* of civil union, for the State can have no other end save their fulfilment. It is in this sense that Kant refers to them as not requiring external promulgation. It does not follow that, because reason is unable to enforce her laws, she must look to an external authority for their inception.²⁸

General Division of the Science of Law. Now if the State can have no other end save securing the individual in his lawful rights, rights determined by reason as being in conformity with her laws, it follows that they are not to be infringed upon by statutory laws. The laws which the State enacts should have as their end the enforcement of and not the infringement of such rights. Kant, therefore, divides the science of law into two parts: (1) *Private Right*, or the system of those laws which require no external promulgations. He terms law viewed under reference to the state of nature *private* right because, in contradistinction to *civil* right, it is not based on the will of individuals as composing a state or civil society, but on the will of individuals as individuals. And (2) *Public* or *Civil Right*, or the system of those laws which require public promulgation. Under this heading fall three subdivisions: (a) *the right of the State*, or *national right*, the system of those laws which are necessary in a civil union if individuals are to be secured in their private rights. However, inasmuch as such laws are regarded by Kant as "necessary *a priori*—that is, as following of

²⁸ This is the error which I think is made by analytical jurisprudence. For an excellent summary and defense of the analytical view see W. W. Willoughby, *op. cit.*, Chap. viii.

themselves from the conceptions of external Right generally—and not as merely established by Statute,”²⁹ they may be said to form a part of an enlarged system of rational law. While in one sense it is a positive law, namely, in the sense that it proceeds from the will of a legislator, in another sense it is not, for it is neither a product of arbitrary will nor of expediency, since it is deducible *a priori* from conceptions of external right generally.

The State is an instrument which, through public laws, seeks to secure individuals in their private rights. But nations, like individuals, may be viewed as existing in a state of nature and as requiring public laws to secure them in their rights. So there arises: (b) *the right of nations*, or *international right* as an extension of the public right of the State and as necessitated by it. And finally (c), as Kant puts it, “as the surface of the earth is not unlimited in extent, but is circumscribed into a unity, National Right and International Right necessarily culminate in the idea of a Universal Right of Mankind, which may be called ‘Cosmopolitan Right.’”³⁰ These three rights, national, international, and cosmopolitan, are so interconnected that “if any one of these three possible forms of the juridical Relation fails to embody the essential Principles that ought to regulate external freedom by law, the structure of Legislation reared by the others will also be undermined, and the whole System would at last fall to pieces.”³¹ All three, in short, must conform to and be deducible from the fundamental principle of right which reason lays down in the sphere of private right.

By public right as the right of the State, Kant means constitutional law, i.e. those laws which establish the ideal form of the State as an instrument for assuring natural rights. By public right as the right of nations, Kant means international law, i.e. those laws which establish the rights of nations in relation to one another, necessitating a permanent congress of nations as an ideal instrument for assuring national rights. By public right as cosmopolitan right, Kant means the right of intercourse, i.e. the right of the citizens of one nation to visit and attempt to enter into com-

²⁹ *Philosophy of Law*, p. 165.

³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 162.

³¹ *ibid.*, p. 162.

mercial relations with the citizens of another. He envisages "a possible Union of all Nations, in respect of certain laws universally regulating their intercourse with each other,"³² based on this right.

II. PRIVATE LAW

Innate Private Rights. So much for the general plan. A detailed treatment of the rights expounded by Kant in the several departments would be undesirable if not impossible in so short an essay. I shall therefore content myself with a brief description. Private rights are of two sorts, innate rights and acquired rights. Kant defines innate right as that right which belongs to everyone by nature, independent of all juridical acts of experience. Acquired right is that right which is founded upon such juridical acts. For instance, the right to possess the soil is an acquired right, since it is dependent on occupancy.³³ There is only one innate right, the birthright of freedom. "Freedom," says Kant, "is Independence of the compulsory Will of another; and in so far as it can coexist with the Freedom of all according to a universal Law, it is the one sole original, inborn Right belonging to every man in virtue of his Humanity."³⁴ It is on the freedom of the will that he founds both his science of virtue and his science of right. However, just as in the field of motive so also in the field of external action Kant's freedom of the will is not a freedom from the laws which the will as practical reason lays down for herself, but is a freedom in entire conformity therewith. Hence man's innate right of freedom is not to be interpreted as Rousseau interprets it, for Rousseau confers

³² *ibid.*, p. 227.

³³ The act of occupancy is juridical because as we shall see later it is founded upon the universal principle of right. Note that in his analysis of rights Kant views *right* as the possession of an object in accordance with the law rather than the lawful in the way of action, i.e. as a *relation* of the subject to an object rather than an *action* of the subject with respect to an object. Such lawful possessions (rights), however, arise from lawful actions of the subject. As for the innate right of freedom, it is simply the right which arises from the general power of free rational choice viewed as an internal possession.

³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 56. Compare his definition of freedom in his essay on *Perpetual Peace*: "My external (lawful) freedom . . . is the right through which I require not to obey any external laws except those to which I could have given my consent" (*Perpetual Peace, A Philosophical Essay*, tr. by M. Campbell Smith [London, 1903], p. 120n.). Note that, in accordance with the latter definition of freedom, to be free, it is not necessary that I give my *active consent*, provided that as *rational will* I could have given my *consent*. Kant's conception of the social contract hinges upon this distinction.

upon man in the state of nature a freedom of desire rather than a freedom of the rational will.

Other so-called innate rights, the innate right of equality, the natural quality of justness, and the innate right of common action, Kant regards as already included in the innate right of freedom. By the *innate right of equality* we mean the right of every man "to be independent of being bound by others to anything more than that to which he may also reciprocally bind them."³⁵ But this is obviously a corollary of the right of freedom, even as the principle of a universal and equal reciprocal compulsion is a corollary of the universal principle of right. By the *natural quality of justness* we mean a quality "attributable to a man as naturally of *unimpeachable Right (justi)*, because he has done no Wrong to anyone prior to his own juridical actions."³⁶ This, too, is obviously a corollary of the right of freedom. For the man who possesses this quality is one who has never betrayed his freedom in accordance with universal laws. And, finally, so too is the *innate right of common action* which can mean naught but the right which every man possesses to "do toward others what does not infringe their Rights or take away anything that is theirs unless they are willing to appropriate it."³⁷ It follows from my innate right of common action that I can, for instance, narrate anything or promise anything, whether truly and honestly or untruly and dishonestly, provided I do not deprive someone of what is his. Regardless of the ethical implications of falsehood, no one has the juridical right to compel me to tell the truth unless by telling a lie I interfere with his freedom of action in the sphere of that which is rightfully his. To conclude, freedom, if by freedom I mean the free exercise of my will in accordance with the universal principle of right as the principle of freedom, is an innate right. And that reason can assign no other meaning to freedom is shown by the fact that the will is free only in so far as it is bound exclusively by its own laws.³⁸

³⁵ *Philosophy of Law*, p. 56. cf. *Perpetual Peace*, tr. M. Campbell Smith, p. 120n.

³⁶ *Philosophy of Law*, p. 56.

³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 56.

³⁸ In his essay *Concerning the Popular Expression: "That may be true in Theory, but will not do in Practice,"* section 2, Kant refers to the *freedom, equality*, and *self-dependency* of the members of a commonwealth as the rational principles upon which the State as an expression of the *united will* of its citizens is founded. "These Principles," he says, "are not so much Laws given by the State when it is established, as rather fun-

Acquired Private Rights. We turn, then, to acquired rights. By acquired rights Kant means those rights to certain external objects—external objects which it is physically within one's power to use—which depend upon an anterior act of will, i.e. upon acquisition or taking possession of the object. As regards the character of the object acquired, acquired private rights are divisible into: "(1) A Corporeal *Thing* external to me; (2) The *Free-will* of another in the performance of a particular act (*praestatio*); (3) The *State* of another in relation to myself."³⁹ As regards the mode of taking possession, acquired private rights are divisible into: (1) *Real-right*, the right to a corporeal thing against the world. The primary mode of such acquisition is by a unilateral act of will, i.e. by primary and original acquisition. But real-rights are also acquired derivatively, i.e. either as incidents to objects acquired by the former mode as in the case of the moveables upon the soil or as a result of contract. Real-right implies a duty not on the part of the thing possessed but on the part of others, though such duties are unenforceable save in a civil union. (2) *Personal right*, the right to determine the future free-will of another. This right is a right against a particular person or persons and is the effect of a bilateral will, i.e. is acquired by contract. (3) *Real-personal right*, the right "to the possession, although not to the use, of another Person as if he were a *Thing*."⁴⁰ Under this falls *conjugal right*, *parental right*, and *household right*. Though real-personal right, as the right to the possession, although not to the use, of another person as if he were a thing, is similar both to real-right on the one hand and personal right on the other, it is not, as regards the mode of acquisition, to be identified with the modes of acquisition characterizing the other two. This will be shown in the more detailed consideration of this right. There are also, according to Kant, certain "ideal" modes of acquisition in

damental conditions according to which alone the institution of a State is possible, in conformity with the pure rational Principles of external Human Right generally." See *Kant's Principles of Politics, including his Essay on Perpetual Peace, a Contribution to Political Science*, by W. Hastie (Edinburgh, 1891), pp. 35ff. This work is a translation of Kant's smaller legal treatises with the exception of section 1 of the essay *Concerning the Popular Expression: "That may be true in Theory, but will not do in Practice."* The passage quoted is to be found on p. 35.

³⁹ *Philosophy of Law*, p. 64.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p. 84.

addition to and supplementing the modes mentioned above. Space, however, will not permit a discussion of these modes.⁴¹

Right of Possession. First as regards the *general* right of external possession. It is possible, Kant contends, for me to call mine an external object which it is physically in my power to use. To lay claim rightfully to such an object, it should not be necessary to have it in hand. Provided there be no prior claim to the same object, the mere fact that I have exerted my will upon it is sufficient to warrant my treating it as mine. For under such conditions the true basis of my claim is rational and not empirical, i.e. it rests on the principle that "everyone is invested with the faculty of having as his own any external object upon which he has exerted his Will,"⁴² a principle of the practical reason and hence in accord with the universal principle of right. This principle may be designated the natural right of private possession, or, as Kant sometimes terms it, "the distributive Law of the Mine and Thine,"⁴³ and it demands that every external and useable thing have an owner,⁴⁴ for in accordance with the universal principle of right, it is impossible for anything to remain "'res nullius,'"⁴⁵ i.e. a thing without an owner. It follows, accordingly, that even in the state of nature we have the "Right to impose upon all others an obligation, not otherwise laid upon them, to abstain from the use of certain objects of our free Choice, because we have already taken them into our possession."⁴⁶

Mere physical possession, then, is not the basis of my claim to an object, for I cannot rightfully claim it as mine unless my claim extends over the period when I am not there. While anyone who

⁴¹ Kant even regards adjudicated acquisition or "Acquisition conditioned by the Sentence of a Public Judicatory" as a mode of acquisition falling under the head of private right. For natural right, he contends, includes "Distributive Justice" in so far as the latter can be known *a priori*. But the judgment of a public tribunal must of necessity contain an empirical element and accordingly in certain cases will have an exactly opposite issue to that which pure reason unaffected by experience might dictate. See *Philosophy of Law*, pp. 141-54.

⁴² *ibid.*, p. 79.

⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 94.

⁴⁴ "It is a juridical Duty so to act towards others that what is external and useable may come into the possession or become the property of someone" (*ibid.*, p. 71).

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p. 62.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p. 63.

attempts to wrest what I have in my hand from me detracts from my general freedom, and accordingly acts in contradiction to the principle of right, I cannot be said to possess an object by right *merely* because I hold it. Nor is a particular spot on the earth mine *merely* because I occupy it continuously with my body. All that I possess in such case is my body, as an internal possession whose juridical character follows directly from my innate right of freedom.⁴⁷ The right to call a thing mine and to resist any who would hinder me in the private use thereof must rest on rational rather than on empirical grounds, for it must be independent of the limiting conditions of space and time. Accordingly, it must depend on "the distributive Law of the Mine and Thine," above mentioned, as a principle of the practical reason. In the case of the first appropriation of the soil by settlers, the right of the appropriator to claim that which he has appropriated and to resist those who would dispossess him thereof is founded upon "the innate Right of *common possession* of the surface of the earth"⁴⁸ by all men *distributively*, which Kant treats as a corollary of the principle of freedom.⁴⁹ This principle, however, is in complete accord with "the distributive Law of the Mine and Thine," according to which all useable things must have an individual owner. Together the two principles may be said to serve as the rational ground of the first settler's right to the soil.⁵⁰

In practice, however, despite the rational basis of my claim, I must in a state of nature stand guard over my property with, as it were, a club. Hence in a state of nature and apart from the restraints of a civil union the mode of possession is merely physical though with a presumption of right. Only in a civil union can I be said actually to possess anything by right, i.e. is my claim other than presumptive. For the guarantee of reciprocal and mutual

⁴⁷ cf. *ibid.*, pp. 68 and 74.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p. 69.

⁴⁹ Kant is at great pains to distinguish between the original common possession of the earth by all men distributively, upon which the private possession of the soil founders, from the "idea of a *primitive* community of things" (*ibid.*, p. 69), which he regards as a fiction. "For the latter," as he puts it, "would have had to be *founded* as a form of Society, and must have taken its rise from a Contract by which all renounced the Right of Private Possession, so that by uniting the property owned by each into a whole, it was thus transformed into a common possession" (*ibid.*, p. 70).

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, p. 69.

abstention which is involved in the conception of right must be secured by a common, collective, and authoritative will.⁵¹ The mere presumption of right, however, provisionally entitles me, according to the law of right, "to restrain anyone who refuses to enter with me into a state of public legal Freedom, from all pretension to the use of such an object,"⁵² which in effect is to compel every person with whom a dispute arises to enter with me into the relations of a civil constitution.

Real-Right. The right to possess an external object is an acquired right, i.e. based on an anterior act of will. It follows that if the state of nature permits of a provisional right to possess an external object as mine, it must also permit of acquisition or taking possession. First, as regards the acquisition of a real-right or right to a corporeal thing, the characteristic mode—from the natural standpoint—by which such things are acquired is that of occupancy or physical appropriation as an original, primary mode of acquisition,⁵³ pertaining where the object acquired was never before possessed by another. That which distinguishes this mode from all other modes of acquisition is its unilateral character. The right acquired is the effect of a unilateral act of will.

Kant feels that in a state of nature and quite apart from the idea of a civil union it is possible to acquire a real-right, or right in a thing, by the mere act of taking physical possession of a hitherto unpossessed corporeal thing existing in space, i.e. by a unilateral act of will. Such acquisition, however, properly takes place only with respect to the soil, all other corporeal things being acquired derivatively, i.e. either in conjunction with the acquisition of the soil as in the case of the moveables thereon or from previous possession by someone. That the possibility of such acquisition—and hence, the acquisition itself—is in accord with the universal principle of right, is evidenced by the fact that it is founded upon "the innate Right of *common possession* of the surface of the earth"

⁵¹ Kant employs the German equivalents of the terms *united will*, *collective will*, *common will*, *omnipotent will* and the like interchangeably. As an expression of the *rational will*, the *united will* is neither a community of interests nor the opinion of a majority. See below.

⁵² *Philosophy of Law*, p. 80.

⁵³ By primary Kant means underived from a previous act of will; by original, first of its kind. For the distinction between the two terms cf. *ibid.*, pp. 83f.

by all men distributively which, as previously indicated, Kant regards as being in entire conformity with the "distributive Law of the Mine and Thine"—the right of private possession. Quite apart from the idea of a civil union, it is lawful for me to appropriate for private use a portion of the earth's surface which has not been appropriated by another, both on the grounds that every object should have an owner and on the grounds that prior to such appropriation it was in the common possession of all, which is to say that it is only in virtue of such common possession that I can rightfully place others under obligation to respect the priority of my claim.

Nevertheless, in practice my title of acquisition remains empirical, for I cannot in practice divorce it from the temporal factor of priority and the spatial factor of occupancy. It is only in conformity with the idea of a civil state of society that it becomes divorced from the limitations of time and space and so actually rational. Hence it is only in anticipation of such a state of society that the title of acquisition, from the rational point of view, even becomes provisory, while it is only when such a state is realized that it becomes peremptory. For I cannot bind another by a unilateral act of will when he would not otherwise be bound. Though my action is juridical, I cannot force others to respect the natural law under which I operate. But in anticipation of the civil society, a provisional duty (corresponding to my provisional right of acquisition) is laid on everyone "to proceed according to the Law of external Acquisition,"⁵⁴ so that I am, as Kant puts it, "entitled to exercise that compulsion by which it alone becomes possible to pass out of the state of Nature, and to enter into that state of Civil Society which alone can make all Acquisition peremptory."⁵⁵

Only in an actual state of civil society, however, is the juridical duty to proceed according to the law of external acquisition enforceable. For it is only as my individual will is included in the collective will of all, united in a relation of common *collective* possession, that I can oblige another person to abstain from the use of that which I claim as mine—an obligation which I cannot place upon him by an individual act of my own will, justifiable though

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p. 95.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p. 91.

I be in so acting.⁵⁶ Accordingly, only in such a society does my unilateral act of will yield a title which is peremptory.

Personal Rights. Personal rights are rights acquired by contract and have as their object the possession of the free-will of another. The contractual mode is a bilateral mode in that the right acquired is the effect of a bilateral will or agreement between two parties. Here, too, as in the instance of the acquisition of real-right, the acquisition is capable of a rational expression, i.e. of being brought under the universal principle of right. In the contractual relation I cannot be said to acquire immediately an external object but only the promise of another person. In securing his promise I come into possession of an "active obligation" on his part and so am adding to my possessions.⁵⁷ It is to be further distinguished from a real-right in that it is a right against another person and not against the world. Now the acquisition of a contractual right is in the first instance empirical, since it takes place by means of a declaration and counter-declaration of two individuals, acts which take place successively. Reason, however, regards the acts as proceeding from the *common* will of the two parties, and, accordingly, as simultaneous.⁵⁸ So conceived, the act becomes a juridical act and places an obligation which would not otherwise be possible on the promisor, i.e. it is in conformity with the universal principle of right. The contractual relation has for its ultimate end the obtaining of certain real-rights. But it is only by the act of delivery that it becomes a real-right. Of itself contract yields only a personal right.⁵⁹ The real-right acquired in this way, however, is not a real-right by primary and original acquisition, but by derivative acquisition.

Real-Personal Rights. In real-personal right I acquire "the Right to the possession of an external object as a thing, and to the use of it as a person."⁶⁰ Real-personal rights relate specifically to the family and the household, i.e. to certain definite persons. Since as persons they must be regarded as free beings, they form a min-

⁵⁶ *Philosophy of Law*, p. 86.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p. 104.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p. 103.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p. 106.

⁶⁰ *ibid.*, p. 108.

iature society. How, then, do I acquire the right to the possession of them as things and to the use of them as persons? Kant's answer is that it is, not by arbitrary individual action, nor by mere contract, but in virtue of the "Right of Humanity in our own Person," as an expression of the innate right of freedom. For the right of humanity in one's own person implies certain juridical duties to oneself and gives rise to "a natural Permissive Law" in virtue of which such acquisition becomes possible.⁶¹ But since the rights acquired are always in relation to beings who are inherently free, one's right is in each case an obligation to respect the right of humanity in another, i.e. implies a duty toward that other. Marriage, for instance, is a reciprocal possession and implies equal rights and duties on the part of the two persons. Parental right implies duties toward the child and rights and duties of the child toward its parents, though the rights and duties of the child differ, in the nature of the case, from those of the parent. Even the right of the master of the household toward the servants is conditional, for whilst he has gained his right to command by a contract⁶²—actual or virtual—the contract must respect their essential freedom. "For a Contract by which the one party renounced his *whole* freedom for the advantage of the other, ceasing thereby to be a person and consequently having no duty even to observe a Contract, is self-contradictory, and is therefore of itself null and void."⁶³ Hence he cannot act toward them as their proprietor or owner, even though formally they belong to him as if by a real-right;⁶⁴ nor can the contract be for life but merely for a definite period.⁶⁵ Slavery, save in the instance of those convicted of a crime—who, in consequence thereof, have been deprived of their legal personality, i.e. possess no rights—is not justifiable, and all children, including the children of those convicted of a crime, are free *by right* from all bondage, contractual or otherwise, "for every man is born free, because he has at birth as yet broken no law."⁶⁶

⁶¹ *ibid.*, p. 108.

⁶² In accordance with Kant's view that real-personal rights are not acquired by arbitrary individual action, nor by *mere* contract, we must regard the right to contract in this instance as grounded in the right of humanity in one's own person.

⁶³ *ibid.*, p. 119.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, p. 119.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p. 120.

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, p. 120. In an "episodical" section (*ibid.*, pp. 132-40) Kant treats of certain

III. CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

The Rational Idea of the State. But despite the existence of rights and duties in the state of nature, this state is a state of war. In fact Kant regards this war as justifiable. "No one," he says, "is under obligation to abstain from interfering with the Possession of others, unless they give him a reciprocal guarantee for the observance of a similar abstention from interference with his Possession." Nor need he wait for experience to prove the desirability of this guarantee, for he would do so at his own peril in view of the antagonism of others. Aggression, as anticipation of a wrong, is therefore justifiable and even though they make war on one another, men may be said to do no wrong to one another, for they do so as it were by mutual agreement.⁶⁷ So much Kant concedes to Hobbes. But in a deeper sense they must be regarded as being in the highest state of wrong for in so doing they bear witness to their willingness to remain in a non-juridical condition.⁶⁸ Man must pass from the state of nature to the state of civil society. The practical reason demands that her rights be made secure, and this can only be done in a civil society standing under a distributive justice, i.e. under a civil order which makes the judgment of a court possible. Kant expresses the practical reason's demand in the following formula: "In the relation of unavoidable coexistence with others, thou shalt pass from the state of Nature into a juridical Union constituted under the condition of a Distributive Justice."⁶⁹

It must again be emphasized that in the field of private right, i.e. in the determination of the rightful actions of men toward one another as individuals, the State is not the inventor of rights but their sustainer. In short, the matter of private right is the same in both the natural state and the civil state of society. It follows that the laws pertaining to the civil state of society as such are the laws

modes of acquisition which he designates "ideal" in the sense that they are devoid of the empirical factors present in the other modes and accordingly are "founded upon a mere Idea of pure reason." There are three such modes: acquisition by usucaption, acquisition by inheritance, and acquisition by undying merit or the permanent acquisition of a good name. Space does not permit a discussion of these modes, nor of acquisition conditioned by the sentence of a public judicatory (*ibid.*, pp. 141-54, incl.).

⁶⁷ *Philosophy of Law*, pp. 157f.

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p. 158.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p. 157.

which express "the juridical Form of the coexistence of men under a common Constitution," i.e. by public law Kant means constitutional law.⁷⁰

It is apparent that Kant stresses the rational necessity of the State rather than its empirical necessity. Reason grasps the necessity of the State apart from all experience. We do not learn from experience prior to the appearance of a civil state of society of man's natural violence and on the basis of such experience establish its necessity, nor does its necessity lie in "some particular historical condition or fact." Rather its necessity is founded in the "rational Idea" of a state of nature as that of "a state of Society not yet regulated by Right," i.e. of a state of society in which rights are merely provisional. Reason informs us that men in the supposed state of nature would never be secure against the violence of one another, for unless he can be assured of an equal compulsion for all—which is possible only in a civil union where there is a suitable authority capable of uniformly enforcing the law and of judging infractions thereof—each individual is justified in going just as far as his inclinations on the one hand and the sagacity and power of his fellows on the other will permit. Accordingly, for the preservation of and actualization of the principles of right, which as rational will she establishes, reason demands that men who cannot avoid coming into contact with one another must form a civil union.⁷¹ So, for Kant, the necessity of the State lies in the logical impossibility of actualizing the universal principle of right save in a civil state of society.

It follows that Kant is cool toward the idea of an original contract viewed as an historical fact. However, to view the State as founded upon reason's demand for an instrument to preserve her pronouncements is regarded by Kant as equivalent to viewing it as founded upon the united will of its citizens. Hence he does not reject entirely the idea of an original contract but regards it as "an outward mode of representing the idea by which the rightfulness of the process of organizing the Constitution may be made conceivable."⁷² The united will is the unanimous consent of all *quâ*

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, p. 156.

⁷¹ *ibid.*, pp. 163f.

⁷² "The act by which a People is represented as constituting itself into a State, is termed THE ORIGINAL CONTRACT. This is properly only an outward mode of

rational. As a deduction from man's rational nature—man's law-giving faculty, which, stripped of all elements of desire and concerned with form only, lays down certain formal principles—and from the purely provisional character of such principles apart from a civil union, the State must be conceived of as founded upon such a united will.

The Ideal Form of the State. Kant feels that if the principles of the rational will are to find complete expression, the form of the State should be ideal. Doubtless any order is better than no order, i.e. than the state of nature—for inasmuch as the state of nature affords no security, the principles of the rational will find no expression therein—but Kant feels that the principles of right find their best expression in a republican form of government. The rational necessity of the State lies in its logical function. Reason demands the existence of the State in order to realize those principles of right which spring from her own nature as practical reason and which cannot be realized in the theoretical state of nature. To view the State in this way is regarded by Kant as equivalent to viewing it as founded upon the united will of its citizens and as actively expressing their united will. It follows that the form of government which most nearly conforms to the idea of a united will as the will of all *quâ* rational will be the form under which the principles of right find their fullest realization, i.e. which conforms most fully to the rational idea of the State. This form is the republican form of government.

The reasons for regarding the republican form of government as superior in the above sense are apparent from its nature. For republicanism is characterized by three features which indicate its conformity to the idea of a united will: (1) the ultimate sovereignty of the people, (2) representation, and (3) separation of the powers

representing the idea by which the rightfulness of the process of organizing the Constitution may be made conceivable. According to this representation, all and each of the people give up their external Freedom in order to receive it immediately again as Members of a Commonwealth. The Commonwealth is the people viewed as united altogether into a State. And thus it is not to be said that the individual in the State has sacrificed *a part* of his inborn external Freedom for a particular purpose; but he has abandoned his wild lawless Freedom wholly, in order to find all his proper Freedom again entire and undiminished, but in the form of a regulated order of dependence, that is, in a Civil state regulated by laws of Right. This relation of Dependence thus arises out of his own regulative law-giving Will" (*ibid.*, pp. 169-70).

of government. The idea of a united will implies the ultimate sovereignty of the people. No State in which the people are not ultimately sovereign can be viewed as founded upon a united will. Hence the ultimate sovereignty of the people is a mark of the State which is founded upon a united will. But the ultimate sovereignty of the people implies a system of representation. To express their rational will the people must establish an *acting* sovereignty over themselves, but the *acting* sovereign must represent them, i.e. express their will and not his own. This *acting* sovereignty will take one of the three established forms of sovereignty or a mixture thereof: autocracy,⁷³ aristocracy, and democracy, depending upon whether a single individual, a class of individuals, or all together, rule over all—for the forms of sovereignty refer to the person or persons who hold the supreme authority in the State. Of the three forms autocracy is the simplest form, democracy the most complex, for under autocracy there is but a single lawgiver, whereas under democracy it is necessary first to unite the will of all to form a people and then to appoint as *acting* sovereign the selfsame united will by which the State came to be. Provided they are representative, Kant regards all three forms of sovereignty as possible under the republican form of government. When non-representative, however, they each become despotic, for in such case the *acting* sovereign reflects his own private will and not the united will of the sovereign people. This can happen even in a democracy, where supposedly the united will is itself the *acting* sovereign, when the majority will is substituted for the united will.⁷⁴ And, thirdly, the republican form of government is characterized by the separation of the powers of government. "Republicanism is the political principle of severing the executive power of the government from the legislative."⁷⁵

⁷³ Kant differentiates between autocracy and monarchy. A monarch is one who merely possesses the highest power, whereas an autocrat possesses all power (*Philosophy of Law*, p. 207). From this it would seem that he regards monarchy as a mixed form of sovereignty.

⁷⁴ Kant is definitely opposed to Rousseau's conception of the majority will as representative of the general will viewed as the will of all distributively. The majority will is simply an expression of the interests of the majority and accordingly a private will.

⁷⁵ *Perpetual Peace*, tr. M. Campbell Smith, p. 125. The doctrine of the necessary separation of the executive from the legislative function is a doctrine of Rousseau, cf. Rousseau's *Social Contract*, Book III, Chap. iv. In his philosophy of law Kant includes also an independent judiciary as an independent representative of the people and re-

Kant regards representative government and the separation of the powers of government as mutually implying one another. Where the lawgiver is in one and the same "person," the executor of "his" own will, a government that truly represents the united will of the people is impossible and despotism results. Now although the autocratic and aristocratic forms of government would appear to be most liable to a confusion of powers, Kant points out in his essay on *Perpetual Peace* that it is possible under such forms for the spirit of a representative government to be maintained, such a spirit as was professed by Frederick the Great, when he said, "I am merely the highest servant of the State." The confusion, however, is fatal to democracy, for here when the confusion takes place there is no way of avoiding the substitution of a private will—here, the private will of a majority—for the united will.⁷⁶ Of all the forms of despotism, paternalism is by far the worst, for in a paternalistic government the citizens are dealt with, Kant says, "as mere children" and not "as Citizens, and according to Laws that recognize their independence."⁷⁷

We are not to suppose that Kant regards the setting up of a republican form of government as immediately leading to the accomplishment of the ends of the rational will but, rather, that without it there is no possibility of a united will which expresses the fundamental principles of the practical reason. It is then a necessary form, a demand of reason. In his *Idea of a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View* he indicates (Proposition 6) that, in view of the limitations of his nature, man cannot expect a perfect order, i.e. an order in which the rational will receives complete expression, but must establish the best that he can and therewith be content. In the same essay he stresses the racial and evolutionary character of the goal. Only through a slow process of cultural and social evolution can man's reformation and perfection be accomplished.

sponsible to them alone (*Philosophy of Law*, pp. 172f.). But the necessity for an independent judiciary plays no part in his discussion of the forms of despotism.

⁷⁶ *Perpetual Peace*, tr. M. Campbell Smith, pp. 125-6. In this essay Kant seems more unfriendly to democracy than in the *Rechtslehre*. This is because he interprets democracy here at its worst, i.e. as of necessity involving a confusion of powers.

⁷⁷ *Philosophy of Law*, p. 171.

Revolution. Kant categorically denies a right of revolution. The idea of a political constitution generally, as the expression of the united will in virtue of which the civil union came to be, implies a supreme power. To permit a right of resistance to the supreme power as the lawfully constituted authority is contradictory because such a right limits the supreme power, in which case it is no longer supreme, nor can it be expected to determine public right definitively. Revolution, accordingly, is an offense against the practical reason as the law-giving faculty.⁷⁸ This pertains particularly to the supreme legislative power. The supreme legislative power—not the people—may, however, depose the executive, but he may not be punished, for the right to punish belongs to the executive power only.⁷⁹

Reform is possible and desirable—for no constitution is perfect—but only through the duly constituted authority and not by seizing the power. For St. Paul's famous dictum, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God," Kant would substitute the precept, "'Obey the authority which has power over you,'"⁸⁰ for—he might have added—the authority that has power over you is ordained of the practical reason.⁸¹ But Kant adds that "when on

⁷⁸ In his essay *Concerning the Popular Expression: "That may be true in Theory, but will not do in Practice,"* section 2, Kant states that, while he is opposed to Hobbes' theory that the sovereign can do no wrong, this does not give the people the right to rebel. For the right to rebel implies a right on the part of the people to dispute with the sovereign in the matter of administration. But such a right is inadmissible, for, on the supposition that the people possess such a right, there would have to be another sovereign above the actual sovereign in order to decide between them, which is, according to Kant, a contradiction. Kant is thinking here of the sovereign as the supreme executive power, but the same argument would apply *a fortiori* in the instance of the sovereign as supreme legislative power, if the latter can depose the former as he contends in his philosophy of law (cf. below). Furthermore, he claims that rebellion would reduce the commonwealth to a state of anarchy, since the people cannot offer opposition as a commonwealth. cf. *Hastie, Kant's Principles of Politics*, pp. 51ff.

⁷⁹ *Philosophy of Law*, pp. 176ff. and p. 194.

⁸⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 256f.

⁸¹ This is a hard doctrine, for it is difficult to see that revolution is not other than necessary in certain instances if the ideal form of government is to be obtained. Kant seems to have too much faith in the rational will and its power to solve its problem through reform. Having decided, however, that revolution is contradictory he must ban it entirely. A somewhat similar difficulty arises in his treatment of international law. Kant lays down the principle that no treaty should be made with the secret intention of further war (cf. *Perpetual Peace*, tr. M. Campbell Smith, pp. 108-9). This would

the success of a Revolution a new Constitution has been founded, the unlawfulness of its beginning and of its institution cannot release the Subjects from the obligation of adapting themselves, as good Citizens, to the new order of things; and they are not entitled to refuse honorably to obey the authority that has thus attained the power in the State.”⁸²

IV. INTERNATIONAL LAW

Kant’s ideas on international law are chiefly set forth in his essay on *Perpetual Peace*. A very brief exposition of a few of the salient points must suffice here. The reign of law in international relations and the goal of perpetual peace can be achieved only by a permanent congress of nations.⁸³ Nations are not unlike individuals in a state of nature. Just as an individual requires the State in order to consummate his lawful rights but does not lose his essential freedom thereby (since freedom rests on law), so free States by common consent must associate themselves together in order to consummate their lawful rights, without, however, losing their independence. Such an association is possible only on the condition that all States adopt a republican form of government, for the reign of law in the international field is predicated on the reign of law within the confines of the member States.

As a dissoluble union of free States each under its own constitution Kant’s congress of nations is not a merger of States. Indeed he regards mergers as both unnecessary and undesirable, unnecessary in that reason does not demand that nations which already have within themselves a legal constitution submit to a common constitution, undesirable in that in large mergers laws tend to lose their force. Furthermore, Kant distinguishes between his congress of nations and the States of the American Union. “By such a *Congress* is here meant only a voluntary combination of different States that would be *dissoluble* at any time, and not such a union as is embodied in the United States of America, founded upon a undoubtedly be right were all treaties made freely, i.e. by mutual consent. But in a world dominated by force this is seldom the case.

⁸² *Philosophy of Law*, p. 181.

⁸³ “It is only by a Congress of this kind that the idea of a Public Right of Nations can be established, and that the settlement of their differences by the mode of a civil process, and not by the barbarous means of war, can be realized” (*ibid.*, p. 225).

political constitution and therefore indissoluble."⁸⁴ Nor are nations precisely like individuals in a state of nature. Hence the employment of force to produce mergers or even associations is wrong. Force is legitimate when employed to induce the individual to enter into a civil union but illegitimate when employed to produce mergers or forced associations of States. Fortunately, Kant claims, nature comes to the rescue of reason and prevents large mergers, employing the differences of language and religion to keep nations apart. To summarize, the goal of perpetual peace can be realized only in a free association of nations in balanced but active rivalry one with another, and not through mergers or through the employment of force.⁸⁵

Kant does not hesitate to recognize the visionary character of the goal of perpetual peace and the difficulties in the way of its accomplishment. In the conclusion to his discussion of law he says, "Hence the question no longer is as to whether Perpetual Peace is a real thing or not a real thing, or as to whether we may not be deceiving ourselves when we adopt the former alternative, but we must act on the supposition of its being real." And again, "although the realization of this purpose may always remain but a pious wish, yet we do certainly not deceive ourselves in adopting the maxim of action that will guide us in working incessantly for it; for it is a duty to do this."⁸⁶ The strength of the idea is unimpaired by the fact that it cannot be achieved immediately. His practical program is to promote a continuous approximation to the goal by the gradual expansion of small unions of republican States. Any attempt to establish a universal association prematurely would, he believes, end in failure. Accordingly he looks with favor upon a federation of European states and mentions the Assembly of the States-general at The Hague, organized in the first half of the eighteenth century, as a step in this direction. He would

⁸⁴ *ibid.*, p. 225. Kant regards the possession of a constitution as the mark of sovereignty and, accordingly, of indissolubility. While it is highly probable that the framers of our constitution conceived of the union as dissoluble by mutual consent and it is certainly true that our States retain a great part of their original sovereignty, the prevailing trend would seem to bear out Kant's contention.

⁸⁵ *Perpetual Peace*, tr. M. Campbell Smith, pp. 133 and 155f.

⁸⁶ *Philosophy of Law*, p. 230.

probably regard the present League of Nations as far too ambitious a scheme.⁸⁷

V. COSMOPOLITICAL LAW

Finally, Kant deals with the universal right of mankind, *jus cosmopolitanum*, "the Right of man as a citizen of the world to attempt to enter into communion with all others, and for this purpose to visit all the regions of the earth."⁸⁸ This right to *hospitability* arises from the original common possession of the soil by all men, a possession, however, which, inasmuch as it is not a juridical community of possession, yields no right to the use or proprietorship of soil possessed by the citizens of another nation, but only the right "of a possible physical intercourse (*commerciuum*)."⁸⁹ The unconditional right of settlement upon the territory of another people is denied. Accordingly, Kant condemns all forceful occupation of the territory of other peoples, i.e. occupation without the consent of those already in possession, unless the new settlement takes place at such a distance from the seat of those in possession that the new settlers and those in original possession would not restrict or harm one another. Such, however, is not the case in the instance of nomadic peoples or tribes of shepherds and hunters who are dependent for support on large tracts of land. In such cases occupation should be by contract only, nor should such contract take advantage of the ignorance of the original inhabitants in the matter of cession of their lands.⁹⁰

Cosmopolitan right differs from international right in that it deals properly with the relations between the individuals of one nation and those of another, rather than with the relations between States. In the essay on *Perpetual Peace* Kant envisages the possibility of the relations established between distant territories on the basis of this right being brought eventually under the public control of law, thus bringing the human race "nearer the realiza-

⁸⁷ *Philosophy of Law*, pp. 224-5; *Perpetual Peace*, tr. M. Campbell Smith, pp. 134-5.

⁸⁸ *Philosophy of Law*, p. 227.

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p. 226. For the distinction between original common possession and juridical community of possession see note 49 *supra*.

⁹⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 227f.

tion of a cosmopolitan constitution.”⁹¹ And in the same essay he concludes that “the idea of a cosmopolitan right is no fantastical, high-flown notion of right, but a complement of the unwritten code of law—constitutional as well as international law—necessary for the public rights of mankind in general and thus for the realization of perpetual peace.”⁹² Cosmopolitan right, accordingly, though not coterminous with either constitutional law or international law, is regarded as a necessary part of the system of public law generally and, as such, necessary for the realization of the ideal of perpetual peace.

The true sovereign of the State is the law itself.⁹³ It is a mistake, claims Kant, to regard the State as a mere instrument for promoting the well-being and happiness of the individual citizens. The aim of the State should be to produce “that condition in which the greatest harmony is attained between its Constitution and the Principles of Right.”⁹⁴ In assuring the rights of individuals it is not promoting their happiness but defending the right. No single principle is productive of more harm, in Kant’s estimation, than the principle that all actions, laws, and institutions are to be judged in terms of the amount of happiness of which they are productive. The only true basis for judgment is the right.

I do not think that we are to infer from this that Kant regards law as the sole end of man. Man is something more than a legal animal. But, as a product of man’s rational will, law must form a part of man’s scheme of rational self-realization. It is a necessary form without which nothing can be accomplished in this direction. The end is man, the individual, as a fully developed rational being, but this can be accomplished only through the universal forms of right.

Finally, we must accept these forms as fixed and immutable. Kant cannot accept the thesis that the basic forms of right, which are to him products of the rational will, are susceptible of change with changing conditions. This would make them the prey to every passing whim and interest. Reason may secure more insight into

⁹¹ *Perpetual Peace*, tr. M. Campbell Smith, p. 139. cf. *Philosophy of Law*, p. 227.

⁹² *Perpetual Peace*, tr. M. Campbell Smith, p. 142.

⁹³ *Philosophy of Law*, p. 210.

⁹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 173.

their nature with the passage of time, but she is simply securing more insight into her own nature, for they are products of pure reason only.

Whether or not we accept the Kantian position we must admit its force in the light of present-day conditions. When the winds of doctrine are blowing men in so many directions, the Kantian position seems like the "shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

XII

A CRITIQUE OF KANT'S PHILOSOPHY OF LAW

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MORRIS R. COHEN

A CRITIQUE OF KANT'S PHILOSOPHY OF LAW

IN the consideration of Kant's philosophic system relatively little attention is nowadays paid to his theory of law. This may be in a measure due to the fact that the *Rechtslehre*¹ (the main work explicitly and systematically devoted to this theme) shows some evidence of being a product of declining years. But the more important reason is the decline of interest in the content of classical philosophy since it has been eviscerated and reduced to a general theory of *knowledge as such*. A topic of central importance to Plato, Aristotle, St. Thomas, Hobbes, Locke, Spinoza, Hume, Kant, Fichte, and Hegel is today left entirely to lawyers who think it ought to be treated by philosophers. But though the *Critique of Pure Reason* has largely contributed to this sad outcome, little reflection is needed to show that the concept of law is fundamental to the whole body of Kantian thought, theoretic as well as practical. Not only is Kant's ethics decidedly legalistic—its supreme principle is expressed in terms of universal legislation—but his basic conception of nature is that of a system of laws not far removed from the Stoic identification of the natural and the rational, which is allied to the neo-Platonic view of Galileo, Kepler, and Newton that the book of Nature is written in mathematical terms. There are doubtless differences between the laws of external motion applicable to the sensory world and the moral law within us. But both in essence emphasize abstract and invariant uniformities. Kant's moral world is an idealized celestial mechanics in which all conduct is governed by absolute rule or regularity. And the laws of physics are in the last analysis laid down by the mind in

¹ The *Rechtslehre* is the first part of the *Metaphysik der Sitten*, published in 1797. A second edition with additions and a reply to a reviewer appeared the next year. This work was translated into English by W. Hastie as Kant's *Philosophy of Law* (Edinburgh, 1887). It is cited throughout this essay as *P.L.* Kant's other writings on this theme, viz. his *Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht* (1784), the second and third parts of *Über den Gemeinspruch: Das mag in der Theorie richtig sein, taugt aber nicht für die Praxis* (1793), and *Zum ewigen Frieden* (1795) were translated by Hastie under the title of Kant's *Principles of Politics* (Edinburgh, 1891). It is cited as *P.P.* Cassirer's edition of Kant's collected works (Berlin, 1912-1923) is cited as *C.* and Hartenstein's (Leipzig, 1867-1868) as *H.*

order to make phenomena objects of rational knowledge. Thus, despite his preoccupation with mathematical physics, Kant does not really abandon the teleologic view of nature, certainly not in the organic realm; and, as regards the course of human events or history, nature is certainly legislative, with definite arrangements to assure moral progress for the race.² "A design may be traced in the mechanical course of nature itself to elicit concord out of the very discord of men, even against their wills."³ "Nature by the mechanism of non-moral motives secures a moral result, to wit, permanent peace."⁴

The keystone of the whole Kantian system, the point at which his theoretic and practical philosophies meet, is his doctrine of God, freedom, and immortality. Though in the *Critique of Pure Reason* the proofs in their favor are rejected, their existence is by no means denied. (The idea of God is even given a regulative use for the field of natural science.) The rejection of these proofs,⁵ Kant assures us, is undertaken only to establish these transcendent realities on the basis of moral faith rather than theoretic knowledge. In the doctrine of the *Summum Bonum*, he undertakes the latter task.

This doctrine of the *Summum Bonum*, expounded in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, has been a great puzzle and stumbling stone to those who approach it from the point of view of purely individual ethics. Why, after Kant has gone to so much labor to prove that we must do our duty for duty's sake and for no other reason, does he in the end spring the demand that virtue be rewarded in accordance with "worthiness to be happy." The latter unanalyzed concept seems to be dragged in *ab extra* without any relevance to, or agreement with, Kant's other ethical ideas. But the puzzle is clarified when we take into account Kant's philosophy of law, according to which it is a moral imperative that offenses be punished and worthy labor be properly rewarded. A society or

² That is the main thesis of his *Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte* (see especially the third proposition), and of the essay on progress which constitutes the third part of *Über den Gemeinspruch* (see especially *P.P.* p. 71). See also the second part of *Der Streit der Facultäten* (*C.*, VII, pp. 393ff.; *H.*, VII, pp. 395ff.).

³ *Zum ewigen Frieden*, *C.*, VI, p. 446; *H.*, VI, p. 427; *P.P.*, p. 105.

⁴ *ibid.*, *C.*, VI, p. 455; *H.*, VI, p. 435; *P.P.*, p. 116.

⁵ See the *Preface* to the second edition of the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, *C.*, III, p. 25; *H.*, III, pp. 24f.; N. K. Smith translation (London, 1929), pp. 29f.

universe in which this is not the case is not moral or just. No moral being having power in the distribution of happiness would give wine to the drunkard or deny to virtuous desires the means of achievement.⁶ "That any one should deserve happiness and yet at the same time not participate in it cannot be consistent with the perfect volition of a rational being possessed at the same time of all power."⁷ In more general terms this means the belief that the imperative ideal can be realized by human conduct in the external world of time and space. While from the point of view of individual ethics the faith in personal immortality secures the continuity of moral effort, and a personal God the efficacy of that effort, when Kant comes to consider civil society and legislation, the continued existence of the human race replaces the immortality of the soul,⁸ and Nature as Providence functions as Deity.

I do not mean to defend the cogency of Kant's doctrine of the *Summum Bonum* or even to give here an adequate account of it. I merely wish to indicate that in the philosophy of law we touch the nub of the whole Kantian system, to wit, how pure reason, which is the only source of moral imperatives, can be effective in the actual world of human conduct.

Law according to Kant is an essential part of morality, the part which deals with those duties that can be externally enforced.

While the lawyer deals with the existing law and its application, the philosopher is concerned with the principles by which to judge what is just and what is unjust law. The distinction, however, between the law that exists and the law that ought to be is not clearly maintained by Kant, partly out of respect for established legal institutions, partly because of the ambiguity of the word *Recht*, which means both the objective law of a state as well as moral right; but the more important influence is Kant's teleology and philosophy of history, according to which man's actual development realizes a moral purpose of nature.

As between the view of Shaftesbury and Adam Smith that human nature is social and sympathetic and the view of Hobbes

⁶ *Tugendlehre*, C., VII, p. 297; H., VII, p. 293.

⁷ *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, C., V, p. 120; H., V, p. 116; Abbott, *Kant's Theory of Ethics* (New York, 1927), p. 206.

⁸ "It is the intention of nature to preserve the race even if thereby it sacrifices individual volition" (*Mutmasslicher Anfang der Menschengeschichte* [1786], C., IV, p. 333; H., IV, p. 321).

that it is essentially bellicose, Kant has the wisdom to adopt both. Like Goethe, he regards man's self-regarding or individualistic traits as implanted by nature to make him struggle and thus make progress. Man's warring disposition makes justice impossible in a state of nature. It is therefore the duty of every individual to be a member of society in which the freedom of everyone is made compatible with the freedom of everyone else by law; and it is both the right and duty of the state to enforce law as a condition of moral life.

One may accept this as generally true, or even as a necessary proposition, without admitting that this is sufficient to determine whether any specific law has the proper moral quality. It is, therefore, well to survey briefly Kant's attempt to view the whole system of law from his philosophic point of view.

The Law of Property

From Kant's definition of law (*Recht*) as "the aggregate of the conditions under which the arbitrary will of one individual may be combined with that of another according to a universal law (*Gesetz*) of freedom"⁹ it follows that all law is public law, and that there can thus be no law of private property apart from the civil state.¹⁰ Kant, however, tries to differentiate private from public law, by claiming that a provisional "law of mine and thine" exists in a state of nature though not guaranteed by any organized civil society.¹¹ This reveals a certain difficulty in Kant's view of the relation of natural to civil law. On one hand, the former is necessarily to be transcended by the latter, and, on the other hand, it is to control it.¹² But this is of relatively little moment here, since the law of property is in any case a demand of pure reason.¹³

Kant does not, to be sure, frequently use the term *property*, but that is essentially what he has in mind when he speaks of "having anything external as one's own." In the main he recognizes that a property right is not a dyadic relation between a person and a thing, but a relation between one person and all others in regard to the

⁹ *Rechtslehre* (*Einleitung*, B), C., VII, p. 31; H., VII, p. 27; P.L., p. 45.

¹⁰ *ibid.* (§§), C., VII, p. 58; H., VII, p. 53; P.L., p. 76.

¹¹ *ibid.* (§9), C., VII, p. 59; H., VII, p. 54; P.L., p. 78.

¹² *ibid.*, C., VII, p. 25; H., VII, p. 22; P.L., p. 33.

¹³ *ibid.* (§§ 5-7), C., VII, pp. 51-8; H., VII, pp. 46-53; P.L., pp. 66-76.

control of things. Any thing, then, is my property if I have the right to exclude you, at my pleasure, from any use of it. All civil societies must, if perpetual conflict is to be avoided, regulate the control which diverse persons may exercise over the same object. There is thus no property where there is no civil law. But if the legal order is to be just it must be based on right principles. What makes the institution of private property just?

Though Kant follows Adam Smith in viewing the labor in commodities as the basis of exchange value, he does not accept the prevalent fiction that property has its origin in the right of every man to the produce of his own labor. He assumes an original common ownership, original not in any historical sense, but in the logical sense that nothing can really become juridically mine except through the recognition of my fellow citizens,¹⁴ and labor is not the only factor which does or should determine individual ownership. This is the justification for taxation and various restraints on the exercise of the constitutional rights of property when they are prejudicial to the public interest.¹⁵

Kant seems to accept the doctrine of classical antiquity that first occupancy constitutes a valid title, but there is also some hint of the theory, later developed by Hegel, that property is necessary for the development of personality, from which it would follow that every person is entitled to some property. But this Kant does not develop.

An even wider issue arises as to what things may be the objects of private property. There are obviously things which have to be excluded from the domain of private control and reserved for the use of the people as a whole, e.g., public buildings, highways, parks, etc. But what things shall be so reserved is a question on which Kant is by no means clear. By branding slavery and serfdom as immoral Kant obviously restricts the right of private property so that it may not include personalities as part of one's possession. On the other hand, he comes close to ignoring the principle of personality in his introduction of the notion of real personal rights, which enables some to treat other persons as if they were inanimate things without wills of their own.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, C., VII, p. 64; H., VII, p. 60; *P.L.*, p. 86.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, C., VII, p. 131; H., VII, p. 142; *P.L.*, pp. 183-5.

The Law of Contracts

One might expect, in view of Kant's rigorous insistence on the duty of truth telling and his emphatic repudiation of the right to tell a lie even for the sake of humanity, that he would emphasize the sanctity of promises and try to derive the law of contracts from it. That, however, is not the case. Kant approaches the topic of contract largely from the point of view of rights transferred by one person to another. The contractual right itself is strictly personal, i.e. it holds only against the other person in the transaction. In the main Kant shows the influence of Adam Smith in emphasizing the importance of a commercial and a money economy. Though the commercial spirit is in itself as unsocial as that of the landed nobility,¹⁶ he regards the moneyed class as the most trustworthy servants of the state. Trade and commerce, indeed, are the principal means of securing general peace, which is the essence of a legal order in the international and cosmopolitan as well as in the private realm.¹⁷ On the other hand, Kant's formalism, his insistence on the form rather than on the substance of transactions, prevents a consistent working out or systematic elaboration of what is involved in the law of contract as a regulation of transactions.

The Law of Persons

In view of the central position which respect for personality occupies in Kant's ethical philosophy, one naturally expects a very strong position as regards the law protecting the interests of personality. But, alas, even great philosophers announce principles which have great emotional uplift but little definite consequences. This is sadly illustrated by the fact that Kant reduces marriage—which he regards as a law of reason—to a mutual lease of sexual organs¹⁸ and denies to illegitimate children the right of existence.¹⁹ If one of the married persons departs the other is entitled at any time to bring such a one back like an errant animal or runaway slave.

¹⁶ *Anthropologie* (§87), C., VIII, p. 209n.; H., VII, p. 639n.

¹⁷ *Rechtslehre* (§62), C., VII, pp. 159-60; H., VII, pp. 170-2; P.L., pp. 226-8.

¹⁸ *ibid.* (§24), C., VII, p. 81; H., VII, p. 76; P.L., p. 110.

¹⁹ *ibid.* (§49E), C., VII, pp. 143-4; H., VII, p. 154; P.L., p. 203.

The protection of the individual against undue interference upon the part of officers of the state is foreign to Kant's mode of thought. It did not exist in the Prussia of his day and was no part of the Roman law. Furthermore, his conception of the rights of women was singularly unsympathetic. Others in his and even earlier days did not regard obedience on the part of a wife as a demand of natural law.²⁰ The confusion between legal and natural rights shows itself in his denial of the validity of a morganatic marriage. Why should a marriage in good faith and with proper religious sanction be invalid simply because the children cannot by law succeed to the throne? Curiously enough, despite Kant's great admiration for, and intense interest in, the works of Rousseau, he says little about the rights of children. Equally indicative of the fact that Kant was following the traditional text-books and the views of his time rather than the principle of respect for personality is the extent of the rights which he grants to a master over the persons in his service.²¹

The Criminal Law

Kant's theory of the criminal law represents in some respect the high water mark of ethical rigorism in jurisprudence. No one has come out more emphatically for the classical retributive theory. He begins with the seemingly unassailable proposition that no one may justly be punished except for having committed a crime, and he vehemently rejects what he calls the Pharasaic maxim that it is better that *one* man should die than that the whole people should perish. "For if justice and righteousness perish, human life would no longer have any value in the world!"²² Respect for personality means that punishment must never be administered merely as a means for promoting another good, either with regard to the criminal himself (e.g. to reform him), or to civil society (e.g. to deter others from crime). "The penal law is a categorical imperative and woe to him who creeps through the serpentine windings of utilitarianism to discover some advantage that may dis-

²⁰ *ibid.* (§26), *C.*, VII, p. 82; *H.*, VII, pp. 77-8; *P.L.*, pp. 111-12.

²¹ *ibid.* (§30), *C.*, VII, pp. 87-8; *H.*, VII, pp. 81-2; *P.L.*, pp. 118-20. Cf. *ibid.*, *C.*, VII, pp. 166-7; *P.L.*, pp. 238-41.

²² *ibid.* (§49E), *C.*, VII, p. 139; *H.*, VII, p. 150; *P.L.*, p. 196.

charge him from the justice of punishment or even from the due measure of it!"²³

The only just principle of punishment according to Kant is the principle of retribution—the *jus talionis*. That alone, he claims, can definitely assign both the quality and quantity of a just penalty. All other standards are wavering and uncertain. "Even if a Civil Society resolved to dissolve itself with the consent of all its members—as might be supposed in the case of a people inhabiting an island resolving to separate and scatter themselves throughout the whole world—the last murderer lying in the prison ought to be executed before the resolution was carried out. This ought to be done in order that every one may realize the desert of his deeds, and that bloodguiltiness may not remain upon the people."²⁴ The imperative that a murderer must be killed is as absolute as the imperative, "Thou shalt not kill."

There is a certain verbal nobility about these seemingly rigorous principles of justice and it must be admitted that they have very often appealed powerfully to the conscience of mankind. Throughout the ages men have revolted most poignantly at favoritism or invidious discriminations in the law. Unequal penalties to people of different stations of life or different classes have been resented as bitterly as have been inequalities in the distribution of wealth, and perhaps even more so.

But a little more regard for human experience which Kant so cavalierly rejects in this field²⁵ suggests that most of Kant's assertions are as weak logically as they are defective in human sympathy and understanding. It is well to assert that no one should be punished except for a crime. But what *should* be regarded as crime? Not only does Kant offer us no satisfactory answer to this question, but one cannot find in his absolute principles that reject experience any adequate basis for such an answer. To say as he does that a crime is "any transgression of the public law which makes him who commits it incapable of being a citizen"²⁶ is only to indicate part of the penalty for *some* crimes (i.e. felonies). And to speak as he does elsewhere of making the punishment proportional to the

²³ *Rechtslehre*, C., VII, p. 139; H., VII, p. 149; P.L., p. 195.

²⁴ *ibid.*, C., p. 141; H., VII 151; P.L., p. 198.

²⁵ e.g., *ibid.*, C., VII, p. 170; P.L., p. 243.

²⁶ *ibid.*, C., VII, p. 138; H., VII, p. 149; P.L., p. 194.

internal wickedness of the criminal is to forget not only that no human being can determine the internal wickedness of another, but that, as Kant himself admits, some criminals (e.g. political ones such as the Scotch Rebels) act from honorable motives.

Against those who refuse to accept the *jus talionis* and regard it as barbaric, Kant offers us no logical or ethical reply. Logically, the *jus talionis* is meaningless in all except a few cases. For the state cannot possibly do something to the criminal which is exactly equal to that which the criminal has done. How indeed *can* a punishment equal a crime? How can a state meet fraud with fraud or inhuman brutality with like conduct without demoralizing or brutalizing its members? What punishment can really be equal to perjury, embezzlement, or criminal seduction? Moreover, the same term in prison, like the same fine of money, does not as Kant himself recognizes, really mean the same amount of punishment for people of different stations and sensibilities. Above all, even where there is some sort of similarity between the offense and the punishment, as in the case of murder and capital punishment, it is by no means clear that this is always demanded by the moral sense of mankind. Indeed, there are many who feel that capital punishment is never justified and who regard Kant's reply to Beccaria as highly fallacious—certainly as inconclusive.

It is characteristic that Kant himself has not the courage of his brutal principles and makes exceptions to his absolute rule in the case of a man who kills another in a duel, and of an (unwedded) mother who kills her infant. Also, where the number of accomplices to a murder is so great that too many citizens will be lost, Kant allows the royal prerogative²⁷ to override the categorical imperative, the "eternal laws of reason which should control public justice." More serious, however, is the consideration that to be consistent Kant must regard all pardon for offenders as a violation of the moral law. But to regard all mercy or forgiveness in hard cases as a sin is surely not the universal dictate of the moral conscience.

Constitutional Law

On the nature of the state and the law that should control its organization and function, there is little in Kant's writings not

²⁷ *ibid.*, C., VII, pp. 143-5; H., VII, pp. 153-5; P.L., pp. 202-5.

previously put forth by Puffendorf, Hobbes, Locke, Montesquieu, Vattel, and Rousseau. But it is instructive to analyze his position even briefly, so as to see how the jural consequences of absolutism are encased in the liberalism of the Enlightenment.

To his fundamental assumption of the moral necessity for legally organized society (in order to make real freedom possible) and the consequent right of the state to enforce its decrees, Kant joins the classical theory of sovereignty *à la* Hobbes, viz. that the supreme power or ruler in a state has only rights and no enforceable duties to his subjects. The laws of the state are to be regarded as necessary *a priori* and not as merely established by statute. From this he concludes in his characteristic absolutistic manner that under no circumstances have the subjects the right to offer active resistance or rebellion. "It is the duty of the people to bear any abuse of the supreme ruler even though it should be considered unbearable."²⁸ Kant does, to be sure, grant them the right to complain or to offer passive resistance, but that right amounts to nothing at all when the ruler prohibits all complaints or any kind of passive resistance. Is not every case of disobedience an act of rebellion? And Kant carries his absolutism to the extent of forbidding any investigation into how the existing government acquired its power,²⁹ so that people are left utterly helpless not only against a ruler who goes beyond his just power or authority but also against a usurper who succeeds in setting up an autocracy.³⁰

Clearly in this attitude to the right of revolution, Kant suffers from a confusion of moral and legal categories. Legally George Washington was a rebel and a traitor before the independence of the United States was recognized by Great Britain, and if the American Revolution had failed, he might have been hanged as was Sir William Wallace. Indeed, even the setting up of the federal constitution for the United States by a process not authorized by the Articles of Confederation was a revolutionary setting aside of a previous constitution, and therefore not in conformity with the

²⁸ *Rechtslehre*, C., VII, p. 127; H., VII, p. 138; P.L., p. 177.

²⁹ *ibid.* (§52), C., VII, p. 147; H., VII, p. 157; P.L., p. 208; cf. also *ibid.* (§49A), C., VII, p. 125; H., VII, p. 136; P.L., p. 174; and the concluding supplementary explanation in the second edition, *ibid.*, C., VII, p. 180; P.L., p. 257.

³⁰ Kant maintains that all authority is from God, but history shows quite clearly that men have attained supreme legislative power by force of arms or trickery that are nearer to the ways of the devil.

older legal order. But what reason is there for denying to people the right to do that? The fact that revolutions sometimes succeed, or that legal systems change—not always for the worse—should have reminded Kant that no actual state or government can embody absolute right or justice, and that the question whether it is worth while to go through the terrible sufferings of a revolution to obtain a better government, is one that involves a balancing of diverse advantages and disadvantages, and is thus a question of the larger prudence or expedience.

Kant's attempt to deal with the problems of government on the basis of absolutistic arguments illustrates what has been called vicious intellectualism, but is more aptly characterized as a failure to examine the adequacy of over-hasty premises. Kant assumes that it would be a logical contradiction and therefore an absolute impossibility for any constitution to provide for its own overthrow or for any resistance to the supreme ruler. But history could have shown him that he had overlooked actual historic instances to the contrary. Thus Magna Charta actually provided for armed resistance by the barons if the king violated the law, and the Constitution of the United States explicitly provides for its own amendment and thus for complete change. In the last analysis Kant really subordinates law to the will of the monarch or ruler, and justifies it by the gratuitous and unhistorical assumption that a single individual can and must embody all the claims of the legal order.

Yet Kant does not escape the liberal influence of the Enlightenment. The attempt to treat all rights as if they were terms of a social contract leads him to condemn slavery and serfdom, to discredit hereditary aristocracy, and to urge the separation of Church and State—it is to him monstrous that people should be taxed to support a church in whose teaching they do not believe. Kant also talks about just government as republican, and lodges the legislative power in the people's representatives. But these words must not mislead us. Republican government means government by law and is thus compatible with Prussian monarchy under a practical autocrat like Frederick II. Kant is decidedly vague as to what he means by representative government. He obviously thinks of a very limited franchise with few representatives, and he

ignores the fact that an elected official or legislator may be in every way unrepresentative even of those who voted for him.

As a Prussian, Kant's ultimate conception of government is that of a monarchy. The logical requirement of sovereignty—of a final authoritative word—is transformed into the necessity that it be a single person whose discretion is put above the law, e.g. in the pardoning power or the power to mitigate the death penalty. Kant distrusts aristocracies and condemns any democratic constitution as despotic.³¹ His argument on the last point is rather confused, but in the end it seems to amount to the contention that if all participate in government the dissenting individual will be oppressed—as if not only minorities but even majorities were not oppressed in all forms of government. Incidentally, however, Kant also supplies the best argument for democracy when he points out that simplicity of government and obedience are not all, that there is a need for developing citizens. And does not the conferring of power and responsibility on the many tend to develop this?

As regards the proper organization of a state, Kant quite uncritically follows Montesquieu in the tripartite division of state powers into legislative, executive, and judiciary. The legislative power should belong to the citizens, not directly but presumably through elected representatives. But apprentices, servants, women, and those whose industry is controlled by others, e.g. woodcutters, resident tutors, or plowmen, are without civil personality. They are entitled to be treated as free and equal but not as active citizens.

Kant envisages the executive power as being in the hands of a supreme ruler or monarch and insists that it be irresistible. Hence, the legislative power may remove a governor but not forcibly and under no circumstances may it punish him. The killing of a king such as Charles I or Louis XVI is a complete perversion of the principles which should regulate the relation between the sovereign and his people. But if a king commits criminal acts, why should he not be punished? If it were proved that Mary Stuart participated in the murder of her husband, why should not the categorical imperative of punishment operate in her case?

Neither the legislator nor the executive, Kant maintains, should exercise the judicial function. The latter should be

³¹ *Zum ewigen Frieden*, C., VI, p. 437; H., VI, p. 418; P.P., p. 92.

assigned to magistrates specifically appointed thereto. While the natural division of labor has strengthened this view and in America this has become one of the pet dogmas of constitutionalism, it is not in fact, and it is doubtful whether it can be, consistently carried through. The legislature is ultimately the highest court to judge whether officers have or have not carried out its enactments; and the executive in enforcing the law must pass judgment as to whether a given course of conduct has or has not conformed to it.

Kant's state is what the Germans call a *Polizeistaat*, not a *Kulturstaat*. It is there merely to enforce order and is in no way concerned with helping its individual members to develop their capacities for a richer life. Each individual as a free being is to mold his own fate and the state is merely to prevent certain kinds of interference from others. Natural handicaps and even the inevitable sufferings from the maladministration of the laws do not concern Kant. Philosophically, he supports an individualism like that of Bentham, without the latter's hedonism.

Kant's distrust of the concept of happiness seems to be based on the notion that it is too vague and that the state which tries to promote the happiness of individuals is embarking on a less certain path than the state that respects the rights of every individual. Yet Kant regards it as the duty of every individual to promote the happiness of his fellows. Is there any reason for believing that a single individual is better able to promote the happiness of his fellows than is the collective power embodied in the state? There is danger of error and of benevolent despotism in both cases, but especially grave is it in the "police state" that gives certain individuals the tremendous power which the accumulation of property involves.

In the reaction against *laissez faire* we are apt to overlook the great virtue of the legalistic view, to wit, that it treats every individual as an equal—equally entitled to the protection of the law, so that all invidious class discriminations are condemned as irrational. But though this emphasis on legal equality is necessary, it is not a sufficient condition for justice in the law. For the law of property does not merely prevent interference but actually directs the way in which the social product is distributed. It is by law and not by nature that one man can own many acres which others need for their sustenance and for which they must pay him part of their

labor. It is not sufficient that legal equality be merely negative. Justice seems to require that in the distribution of goods some regard for the necessities of life on the part of all citizens should be attended to. Without adequate provision for physical sustenance, freedom is a snare and a delusion. If the lawless acts of our fellow men can interfere with our moral development, why may not their organized cooperation be helpful in that regard?

International Law

In his conception of international relations and international law Kant's juristic philosophy is seen at its best. For here he consistently applies his fundamental principle to derive significant results of unquestioned value to mankind. If a reign of civil law is necessary to save us from the natural state of war and to make moral development possible, it follows that some form of law must govern all mankind. But as [empirical] geographic conditions prevent a universal state, this supreme objective can be brought about only by a legally organized federal union of all the states. To be effective, such a union can be constituted only by republican states, i.e. by states each of which is governed by law. For the various peoples of the world have become so interdependent that a violation of just law in one place is felt everywhere else.³² Thus the age-long craving of mankind for universal peace is connected with the supreme principle of jurisprudence and politics. This ideal of the ages has seldom been expressed with greater logical cogency and clarity, and the fact that it was written after the outbreak of the wars of the French Revolution only indicates that the validity of an ideal is not affected by the temporary defiance of it by the warlike impulses in human nature or by ruthless governmental leaders.

In the actual elaboration, however, of the principles of international law, Kant departs from his great principle and follows the usual text-books which formulate the European conventions as

³² Kant also alleges that in a state where war depends upon the consent of the citizens, the latter will be loath to vote to fight in their own person, to supply the cost of the war, to repair its damage, and to bear the burden of the resulting debt. But this empirical generalization is, alas, not borne out by the actual history of representative government.

to the rights of a state to declare war, etc. Thus, though he condemns spying, he does not protest against blockades which actually starve people.

* * *

The foregoing survey reveals a number of difficulties which are significant not only for any judgment of Kant's philosophy but for any attempt at an adequate consideration of the issues involved.

The Relation of Law to Morality

That law and morality cannot be identical is obvious from a number of considerations. There are many moral duties, e.g. truth telling, which might be enforced by law and in *some* cases are enforced, but which generally are left to individual conscience or to prevailing social approval or disapproval, because attempted legal enforcement would involve great expense to the state and many inconveniences would result from it. This, however, Kant cannot allow, because it brings in questions of expediency. On the other hand, there are legal duties which are not directly moral ones. *Culpa* or unintentional wrong does not, according to Kant himself, involve any moral guilt. Yet it does involve legal penalties. But even more serious is the fact that the actual law can never embody perfect justice and therefore always contains elements of injustice. Kant, as was indicated above, tends to glorify the existing law and regards it as having divine authority. But if this were true, there could not be such things as unjust law, and the whole history of the human struggle for justice throughout the ages would be a vast error or even meaningless. And Kant is not willing to accept this consequence of his view. He insists that the right or authority of the legislator to bind others by force rests on natural or moral law. But if natural law is the justification for obedience, why should we obey laws contrary to "nature" or the principles of justice?

For a better understanding of the issue involved we must realize the difficulty not only of identifying law and morality but also of completely separating them, as has been attempted by so many positivists since the days of Thrasymachus. The law affects every phase of our life directly or indirectly, and

it is intellectually impossible to avoid some judgment as to what it should and what it should not do. Moreover, to say that law is simply the arbitrary will or decree of the strongest, the sovereign, or the dominant class, is either a disguised tautology or an ignoring of obvious facts. If the strongest class means the one that succeeds in enacting the legislation, then the proposition is a mere tautology. If, however, it means that certain people are for all purposes omnipotent and the rest of the people who obey are completely helpless, then it ignores the fact that a certain amount of consent on the part of the governed always exists and is in fact necessary to make law function. It is not true that law rests only on the policeman's club and soldier's bayonet. The latter depend on the support of the people who pay taxes to maintain policemen and soldiers to protect them against disturbances of the peace within their own community or from abroad. Generally speaking, it is absurd to suppose that government rests on force alone, that everyone wants to be free from law, and only fear compels anyone to obey it. As a universal proposition this is clearly false. People in the main wish to be governed and will pay a great deal for it in the way of tolerating governmental abuses. This of course does not mean that every specific law is regarded as just. But for the most part people actually respect the main body of the law and often regard it as of divine sanction, especially so in case of constitutional law. Indeed, no legal system can operate for any considerable time unless it is felt to be just in large measure by a large portion of the people. We may therefore assume that every existing legal system is felt to have some moral value, but that its imperfections are tolerated because actual conditions do not make a better alternative feasible.

But this balancing of advantages and disadvantages, or for that matter any calculus of values, is ruled out by Kant because he conceives of morality as consisting of specific rules each of which is absolute in its own right.

Kant's emphasis upon the categorical imperative as the supreme principle of morals (or of obedience to the law as the supreme jural principle) must not mislead us into thinking that the specific rules are derived from it. The categorical imperative in its various forms is rather the philosopher's formulation of what it

is that constitutes the specific moral character of any rule. Kant is emphatic in the belief that the philosopher cannot teach mankind its moral duties. These duties rest upon the dictates of conscience which Kant repeatedly insists are universal, clear, and absolutely certain. In other words, Kant accepts the prevailing conception of the ethics of conscience as a code of nature written on the tablet of every human mind, so that even the worst criminal never complains that his punishment is unjust.

But, quite apart from the familiar difficulties as to the variability and uncertainties of conscience, we cannot logically have a number of diverse rules each of which is absolute under conditions where there are in fact conflicts. Thus, Kant regards slavery as immoral. This would make it immoral for any one to obey a law which commands the return of a slave to his owner. For thereby the individual would be actively participating in injustice. On the other hand, if he disobeys the law he is guilty of rebellion against that which is the voice of God, etc. One may take the position that the science of ethics gives us a determinate answer as to what is our duty in every case—though that is a debatable proposition—but we clearly cannot have a system of ethics constituted by a number of independent absolute rules of the kind that Kant assumes. While therefore he is profoundly sound in insisting that law is a part of enforceable social morality, the rules which he lays down cannot be absolutely valid for all societies as well as for all individuals regardless of time, place, and circumstance.

Why does Kant take that position? Ethically, it is due to the absolute contrast which he feels between rules of morality and those of prudence which he calls expediency and which men like Aristotle regard as wisdom applied to the conduct of life. Logically, however, Kant is bound by his assumption that moral rules are absolutely imperative and cannot therefore rest on experience or history. For we must remember that to Kant experience always involves a sensory element and there is obviously nothing in the external world directly corresponding to duty or obligation.

The Formal or *A Priori* Elements in the Law

But how can pure reason prescribe rules dealing with men and women, living on earth under diverse conditions?

It is obvious that these rules which Kant actually regards as dictated by eternal reason may be expedient or advisable under certain conditions but by no means universally so.⁵³

Consider for instance his claim that life tenure for competent officials is based on reason. We may grant that such is, under certain conditions, advisable for judges, professors, possibly priests, policemen, and others. But surely there is nothing absolute or universal about such rules; and many states, if not all, have deemed it right to depart from that rule. Whatever we may think of representative government, surely election of officials for terms of office in the legislature and elsewhere cannot be judged as opposed to immutable reason. Again, Kant assumes that reason dictates that men can transmit their titles of nobility to their wives, but not conversely. But this is obviously a purely conventional arrangement and by no means rationally necessary. Kant assumes that an hereditary monarchy is rational when it exists. Yet he admits that good will or even talent is not hereditary. These are not mere lapses which might be disregarded and yet leave Kant's fundamental attitude unchanged. The very existence of human beings under different geographic conditions and with different traditional customs is an empirical or contingent fact which cannot be deduced from pure reason, and to prescribe rules as to how they should be governed without studying their actual conditions seems as absurd as to prescribe their diet or medicines *a priori* on the basis of pure reason without any admixture of empirical knowledge.

This approach to the problem reduces Kant's position to such an absurdity that one may well wonder how such a powerful mind could have been led to it even in old age.

There are, however, a number of elements which make the situation more intelligible:

(1) In the first place, we must remember that in Kant's day the assertion that mathematics and physics contained *a priori* proposi-

⁵³ Kant, indeed, sometimes comes close to recognizing that his legal rules are grounded in expediency. Thus, though he condemns oaths asking God's help as superstitious (*Rechtslehre* [§40], *C.*, VII, p. 110; *H.*, VII, p. 104; *P.L.*, p. 151), he is willing to allow their use if there is no other way of getting the truth. He is also willing that the death penalty should not be applied in some cases where the threat of such penalty would not be a deterrent.

tions was unquestioned. In the *Introduction* to the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant assumes that the fundamental principles of Euclidean geometry and Newtonian physics are such *a priori* principles, and the whole problem of the critical or transcendental philosophy is to explain how they are possible.

(2) To this must be added the still prevailing view that the principles of ethics are eternal and immutable, and that they are revealed clearly and unmistakably in the conscience of all mankind, so that all local and temporal differences are irrelevant.

(3) Finally, the system of jurisprudence, which Kant expounds on the basis of the text-books of modern Roman law current in his day, goes back for its language and main characteristics to the classical Greek philosophy, as applied to general human relations by the Roman jurists in the *Jus Gentium*, which became the *Jus Naturale*, and seemed for millennia to be the law of human reason.

The historical development of the nineteenth century and the wider horizon produced by the discovery of non-Euclidian geometry, of non-Newtonian mechanics, and of civilizations that are not of the classical-Christian type, have made the three foregoing assumptions indefensible. We need not exaggerate the variations of legal systems. We may admit that so long as human beings have the relatively constant traits which history and psychology reveal, certain legal arrangements will always be necessary. But such judgments are surely not free from empirical elements.

There are, however, jurists such as Staminler, Reinach, and, in part, Kelsen who still contend that jurisprudence, like ethics, is a normative science prescribing what *ought to be* and cannot possibly be deduced from any empirical or other description of *what is*. By no logically valid process can we get an *ought* into our conclusion if there is none in our premises.

This theoretic position is strengthened by the practical demand of justice that we ignore all differences such as that between rich and poor, nobles and commoners, and treat all men alike. And this is represented by the traditional symbol of justice as blindfolded. She can weigh the merits of the case but she must be blind to the persons before her. The law must be no respecter of personal differences. It is the latter aspect of the popular conscience which is the basic strength of Kant's formalism. The law must not inquire

as to the content of the transaction before it. It must not be concerned, e.g., with whether either party profited by the transaction in question. It must be concerned only with the question whether each was free.³⁴

The unsatisfactory character of the formalistic conception of justice in its actual workings suggests, however, that its fundamental assumptions might not be altogether satisfactory. Thus, while the principle that all men should be equal before the law seems indispensable for any theory of justice, it is hardly sufficient. Justice, to be sure, demands impartiality on the part of the judge. But does this impartiality require ignoring the specific facts of the case? We say of course not! The impartiality of the judge means only that he must not take into account those facts which the law has declared irrelevant. And surely the legislator who formulates the law justly must take into account actual conditions and differences of all sorts. There may be certain kinds of class legislation that are felt to be reprehensible but surely all general legislation sets up classes; and such class differences as those between children and adults, even though the line of separation is arbitrary, are generally recognized as necessary. Even in the purely personal realm, Kant's categorical imperative, if taken to mean, Treat every man alike as a human unit, needs to be supplemented by the polar command, Treat every man (including yourself) as unique. Mephistopheles refers to Faust as the doctor, but the Lord calls him by his individual name.

Moreover, on purely intellectual grounds the formalistic position may well be attacked as in itself empty and incapable of determining any specific jural or ethical issue. Thus, while the principle of respect for personality is one that no one is inclined to challenge or deny, we may well raise the question whether by itself it determines what should or should not be the law in any given situation. Can Kant or anyone else work out a theory of punishment for the diverse kinds of crimes purely on the basis of respect for personality? What does it mean to treat every individual as an end in himself? Does it mean that a government has no right to conscript a man against his will and make him kill some fellow man in battle

³⁴ *Rechtslehre*, (*Einführung*, B.), C., VII, p. 31; H., VII, p. 27; *P.L.*, p. 45.

or be killed himself?³⁵ Does it mean that in building a road or bridge we may not expropriate individuals who are attached to their ancestral homes? There are many cases where the wills of different individuals come in direct conflict. Two men want the same thing and their wills cannot be harmonized at all by any human law. What the law does is to provide rules whereby in a class of cases one shall prevail over the other. In all human relations we must use others as means to attain our ends, and there does not seem to be any formal rule which will enable us to tell whether, for instance, if I ask my teacher or friend to recommend me for a given position I am or am not using him *merely* as a means. There are in any cultivated society rules of respectful address, but these are fixed by convention and there certainly are no formal rules of immutable reason to determine the degree of respect to rulers, officials, servants, etc. In general, formalism, the emphasis upon the abstract universal relation in which all men are to be considered alike, is not a method which sharpens our sensitiveness to the diversity of the claims of different individuals or social groups. Thus there is not in the Kantian system any recognition of the necessity for empirical or factual studies of the actual remediable conditions that bring about intense suffering and misery. Thus Kant, despite his principle of respect for human personality, offers us no basis for promoting humane efforts to mitigate the deplorable conditions not only of those who meet with natural misfortune but also of those who are the victims of the inevitable mistakes and acts of injustice, of which governments conducted by human beings are never free.

These consequences are hidden not only in Kant's but in other formalistic jural systems by the multiplicity of fictions which have become so current that they are treated as facts and made the basis of arguments. Thus, all sorts of invidious discriminations are justified by the false assertion that economic dependence on the will of others does not involve lack of freedom. Thus any argument that the law, as a social contract, or in any other way, actually expresses the will of *all*³⁶ is an obvious falsehood, and all defenses of the law based on it are sophistical.

³⁵ The argument that the state makes the individual and has a right to dispose of him as its property certainly takes no account of the principle of respect for personality.

³⁶ This view Kant gets directly from Rousseau.

Kant frequently invokes the principle of contradiction to prove that certain legal arrangements are impossible, for example, that a contract of slavery is self-contradictory. But if such arrangements actually exist, they cannot be logically impossible. Thus, when Kant urges that it is impossible to have a court of equity take jurisdiction over cases of conscience, he ignores the actual existence of church courts or of the English court of chancery in its original form. The principle of contradiction cannot prove existing institutions to be impossible.

This brings us back to the fundamental issue of the whole Kantian philosophy, to wit, to what extent purely rational or noumenal entities can have causal efficacy in the empirical world.

Can Metaphysical Free-Will be a Factor in the Law?

In considering the law, it is well to remember that it deals with the outwardly or phenomenally manifested acts of human beings who are born and die and are thus creatures in time and space. The freedom which these human beings demand and which the law can protect always has a spatio-temporal locus, e.g. freedom of the body from assault or detention, or freedom from hindrances to the obtaining of the things we want, e.g. food, human companionship, or the activities of self-expression in work or play. Now these activities, like all the phenomena of human conduct (including the number of marriages), are, according to Kant's own admission, subject to the laws of natural causation. Is it at all necessary, then, in considering right or just law, to go beyond the empirical realm and consider that other kind of freedom, the transcendental or metaphysical kind? It is sometimes urged that unless men are free there is no sense in holding them responsible for any of their acts. But the legal tests as to who is responsible are always empirical; and the law like all sane activity assumes some determinism in human affairs, i.e. that certain deeds will have certain consequences. This does not dispose of the problem of transcendental free-will, but it indicates that it is not necessary for the determination of what is just law in the proper organization of any human society. Moreover, it might not unfairly be noted, in passing, that men like Kant and Hegel who make most of metaphysical freedom, leave us rather little of the freedom that we do care about, such as

freedom from oppression by despotic rulers against whose outrages we must offer no active resistance. In any case, those who like Kant try to justify government on the basis of the transcendent freedom of the individual do so by systematic ambiguity between the noumenal and phenomenal meaning of the term. In the phenomenal realm there can be no recognition of the absolute freedom of any individual. Indeed, it might well be asked whether any kind of plurality, or rational society, of absolutely free individuals is logically possible, since the very existence of any one must in some way limit any other.

Kant assumes that transcendental freedom is necessary to explain the phenomena of the moral life. But in strict logic it cannot do so. If the moral imperative which tells me to respect human personality, or to treat everyone as an end in himself, is purely rational, it cannot decide without the aid of some sensory perception the empirical fact as to who actually has human traits.

The Kantian freedom of the will means a form of causation, quite different from the kind of causation in the natural world. In the natural world cause and effect form a series in which there is no first or last term. Cause and effect are on the same level. But in moral determination pure reason, according to Kant, is not a temporal term and yet it produces practical effects in time. How that is possible or reconcilable with the universality of natural causation (on which he always insists), we are in no way told. On the other hand, if certain acts or social arrangements are pronounced unjust because they interfere with transcendental or noumenal freedom, are we not assuming that the phenomenal world can have causal efficacy in the noumenal realm? And if there is this constant interaction between the noumenal and the temporal, how can we maintain the purely rational and non-temporal character of the former?

Many details of the Kantian jurisprudence are antiquated and many more are likely to be so very soon. But Kant's attempt at a philosophy of law is still significant. For all the intellectual currents of the eighteenth century have passed through him and have been largely deflected by him. Two of these may be mentioned here, viz. traditional pietism and the philosophy of the Enlightenment. The former regards legal and moral rules as divine in origin,

KANT AND MODERN AXIOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

IT has been said that European philosophy consists in a series of footnotes to Plato. Whether that is wholly true or not, it is certainly true that modern philosophy, in so far at least as it is at all critical, consists in a series of footnotes to Kant. It would be interesting and rewarding to enumerate some of these footnotes. It would be found, I think, that they include everything that is most distinctive in contemporary philosophy. In many cases, it is true, the footnote in question is an overemphasis of some one aspect of Kant's many sided thought, as for instance the *Philosophy of As-If* of Vaihinger, or certain forms of modern positivism. In other cases it consists in the correction of some basal thesis in Kant's analysis, as for instance certain modern doctrines of space and time and conceptions of the *a priori* and their relation to the empirical in knowledge. But in all these cases the modern notions are wholly understandable both in content and form of statement only as they are related to the Kantian way of thinking. When, therefore, James said that the way to philosophy is not through Kant but around him, he enunciated not only an untruth but an absolute impossibility. Not only has the way to philosophy actually been through Kant, as any adequate history makes clear, but those who have attempted to go round him always find the little sage of Königsberg again smiling sardonically in their path.

One of the more important of these footnotes to Kant is that development in modern philosophy known as Axiology. The close historical connection of this movement with Kant is universally recognized; the entire development of the value problem would be admitted by many to be such a footnote to the *Critique of Practical Reason*. The origin of the pragmatic movement in the basal ideas of this *Critique* is recognized by John Dewey himself. The axiological movement of Windelband and Rickert is an extension of the notion of the primacy of value from the merely "practical" to the theoretical realm—an extension which, according to their views, was already implied in the Kantian position. Even that

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stream of value theory connected with Phenomenology serves but to prove our thesis. If Phenomenology itself, apart from its significance as a revolt from *Psychologismus*, turns largely upon an important modification of the *a priori* as found in Kant, so phenomenological axiology, as represented in Scheler and Hartmann, turns upon a similar modification of the notion of the *a priori* as found in Kant's theory of value. A critical revaluation of the Kantian analysis has always constituted the starting point of all these movements.¹

It is true, of course, that not every theory of value belongs to axiology and the axiological movement. One could hardly place in this movement either the "value nominalism" of the positivist who finds value judgments not judgments at all but expressions of emotion which have no reference and are therefore meaningless. Nor could one call axiological a theory which looks upon a judgment of value as a statement that the object is the object of liking or disliking or interest. There are what I shall describe as three notes of modern axiology upon which all agree.

The first of these is the objectivity of value. All those who use the term at all agree on this main thesis. However the different schools of axiology may differ in details, and however different their views as to the nature and the implications of this objectivity, on the objective character of values there is no doubt. The second note is closely related to the first. Such a view always involves the further notion that there is a unique knowledge of values as distinguished from knowledge of sense data, and with this notion comes the restoration of some form of value intuitionism. Here too the emphasis may vary, now on the rational and now on the emotional side, but the new intuitionism is the note of every form of axiology. Finally there is a third problem central to every form of axiology—namely that of the relation of value to being. Again views may differ widely, but all agree that values have some kind of objective "existence" or being and that problems of value and problems of existence cannot be separated. It is then the relation of these three aspects of modern axiology to Kant which will engage our attention in the following pages.

¹ The central place which Kant's theory of value plays in all modern axiological discussions is apparent not only in German works, as for instance those of Scheler and Hartmann, but also in English, as witness, for instance, Laird's *The Idea of Value*.

I

THE AXIOLOGICAL PROBLEM IN KANT

When one speaks of Kant and modern axiology it is with the *Critique of Practical Reason* that we are supposed to be chiefly, if not wholly, concerned. The traditional interpretation of the Kantian thought divides it into two contrasting streams. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* we have the critique of *knowledge*; in the *Critique of Practical Reason* we have a critique of *values* and *valuation*. It is commonly held that these two *Critiques* are in a sense independent, and there is still a fairly persistent view that the real Kant is found in the first *Critique*, that the second is an after-thought or *addendum*, in which, so to speak, Kant gave back half-heartedly with one hand what he took away with the other. The fallaciousness of these views is, however, generally recognized now by serious students of Kant. Not only is the second *Critique* prepared for at every important step of the argument of the first and is, in a sense, the "crown and completion" of that argument, but, as I shall attempt to show, the value notion is the central concept of the first *Critique* itself. The real locus of the axiological element in Kant's thought is found in the *Critique of Pure Reason*—more especially in that section of the *Transcendental Methodology* known as the *Canon of Pure Reason*. Some comment upon and interpretation of this part of the Kantian critique will therefore constitute the center of our study. But it is necessary, first of all, to say something of the second *Critique*.

Axiology and the Critique of Practical Reason

We have only to put Kant into his historical setting to see the significance of his analyses here. For the purposes of this paper, this setting may be described in terms of two movements: 1) British empiricism, and 2) the Newtonian physics.

The latter, which Kant in the main assumes as the background of his entire thought, had not only inevitably changed the traditional view of the cosmos, but also the place of values in that cosmos. The supposed elimination of all anthropomorphism from science from Galileo on involved the extrusion of all values from the cosmos. If the secondary qualities were put on the subjective side of the equation of knowledge, *a fortiori* the tertiary qualities

were also. The world picture as envisaged by science is an essentially *wert-frei* picture as it never was for science and philosophy before. This world view was reinforced by the analysis of knowledge of British empiricism. If this analysis excluded all forms of the *a priori* (under the false name of innate ideas), *a fortiori* it excluded all *a priori* knowledge of the good or value, which was a fundamental principle of the entire European tradition, and equated value with the subjective feelings of pleasure and pain.

The subjectivity of all values (especially the subjectivity of moral values with which Kant was primarily concerned) was the inevitable consequence of both movements of thought. It was, therefore, this subjectivity which Kant was concerned to meet. He met it in two ways: a) by his doctrine of an *a priori* element in valuation, more specifically, by his analysis of the unique character of the consciousness of obligation and its underivability from sense experience, including experiences of pleasure and pain; and, b) by his doctrine of postulation, by which he sought to restore to objectivity the value ideas which had been extruded from the cosmos by the development of the Newtonian world picture. In other words, Kant saw clearly that, granted the premises of the two movements described, the traditional European philosophy was dead. He could not, however, believe that it was dead, but required restatement. Kant's critical thinking may, of course, be evaluated from many angles, but not the least important is to view it as an attempt to restore the notion of the Good (or value) to its traditional place in European thought. I do not say that he was always conscious of this goal of all his thinking, but I do maintain that when his philosophy is seen in its true perspective this motivation is seen to be fundamental.

The Correction of Kant

It is well known that this attempt has proved unsatisfactory to many philosophical minds. This is not the place to consider the various sources of this dissatisfaction, whether of the empiricists and positivists or of the rationalists and idealists. We are concerned here with the axiological movement—and with the point at which this movement has been a footnote to Kant.

For axiologists in general the chief point of criticism has uniformly been Kant's stopping with the ought or obligation and not

pushing through to the values which the consciousness of ought presupposes. They may criticize his formalism, his intellectualism, and his theory of the *a priori*, but the essential point which constitutes their footnote to Kant is a correction of his view of the relation of value to the ought. There is still an element of subjectivism in the *Critique of Practical Reason*. It reverses the true relation of the ought to volition. For Kant it is the will, even though transcendental, that determines or creates values, whereas the true position is that it is the values, as prior and objective, that determine the will and its obligation.²

There can be no question, I think, that if the second *Critique* be taken by itself, this element of subjectivity remains in Kant's theory of values. It is, however, only when it is viewed apart from the first *Critique* that this is so. The axiological element in the *Critique of Pure Reason* when properly understood and interpreted, gives, I think, another and different impression. To this we shall now turn.

II

THE AXIOLOGICAL MOMENT IN THE CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON

The essential doctrines of the practical reason were, as we have said, prepared for in the pure reason. Stating this fact in the terms of our present discourse, Kant's theory of value is part of his theory of knowledge and of his metaphysics. By this I mean not merely, as is ordinarily supposed, that at the close of his negative conclusions regarding the pure reason he enunciated the doctrine of the primacy of the practical reason and prepared for the positive conclusion of the second critique. I mean rather that, by showing the primacy of value *even in the pure reason*, he established it as central in his entire philosophy.

The part of the *Critique* in which this relation is worked out is in the *Transcendental Doctrine of Method*. Here Kant speaks of the discipline of the pure reason—and he, of course, counsels a severe discipline of what he calls the dogmatic tendencies of traditional rationalism. He also speaks of an architectonic of pure reason in which the various types of the employment of reason are related, and in which the significance of metaphysics as “the full and com-

² Hartmann, *Ethics*, tr. by Stanton Coit (New York, 1932), Vol. I, p. 158.

plete development of human reason,"³ or culture is developed. But he also speaks of a *canon* of pure reason and it is here that the axiological moment chiefly appears.

The Canon of Pure Reason

According to Kant, reason in all its forms—in all its various types of employment, empirical and speculative or dialectical—is guided by an ideal or norm. The formulation of this norm he describes as the "canon of pure reason." He defines such a canon as "the sum-total of the *a priori* principles of the correct employment of certain faculties of knowledge."⁴ Now a canon or norm can be established only in the light of some ideal or ultimate end of pure reason—in short only in terms of some value notion. This Kant recognizes in his statement that "the ideal of the highest good [is] a determining ground of the ultimate end of pure reason itself."⁵ This is Kant's statement of the primacy of value, or that the theoretical reason itself is determined by or oriented towards value.

It is true that, with the practical reason in mind, he tends to formulate this principle in a narrow moralistic way. Speaking in the eighteenth century idiom still natural to him in many ways, he finds it "evident that the ultimate intention of nature in her wise provision for us has indeed, in the constitution of our reason, been directed to moral interests alone."⁶ He points out that the "merely speculative interest [in the ideas of reason] is very small; and for its sake alone we should have hardly undertaken the labor of transcendental investigation—a labor so fatiguing in its endless wrestling with insuperable difficulties"⁷ were it not for this relation to the practical (moral) interests. But I think it not unfair to say that the terms "practical" and "moral" mean much more in the mouth of Kant than they do in ordinary speech and that we are not distorting his meaning if instead we say "directed to values alone."

³ Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. by Norman Kemp Smith (London, 1929), p. 665 (A850=B878). The specific references to the *Critique of Pure Reason* are throughout this discussion to the Kemp Smith translation.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 630 (A796=B824).

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 635 (A804=B832).

⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 632f. (A801=B829).

⁷ *ibid.*, p. 631 (A798=B826).

This interpretation is, I think, all the more justified when we consider his definition of the notion of "practical" as used by him. "By the practical," he writes, "I mean everything that is possible through freedom."⁸ Freedom, as he develops in the second *Critique*, is both the presupposition and the postulate of the consciousness of value and of obligation. Surely if this is what the "practical" means, truth is a value or good as well as the more narrowly moral goods. For it is precisely the character of truth that it also is possible only through freedom. It is only as "the ideal of the highest good as the determining ground of the end of pure reason itself,"⁹ is freely acknowledged that truth itself has any meaning. To say that the practical is everything that is possible through freedom is the same thing as to say that the practical includes all activities of reason in that all are determined by the idea of the good. The problem of knowledge is part of the problem of value at large.

Kant's position here may therefore be restated thus in terms of modern axiological discourse. The reason in all its forms—even the pure reason—is ultimately oriented towards the good or value. When we talk of "pure" reason, it is really an abstraction. We can imagine Kant saying: "I have, to be sure, divided the reason into the pure and the practical, and the former into the empirical and speculative employment, but really these are the results of an abstraction. The reason functions as a whole and, when so viewed, it functions under a certain ideal or canon which I have described. It is true that these various ways of employing our reason must be distinguished. Otherwise we shall proceed uncritically. It is a mistake to think that if we accept or acknowledge, the 'postulate of empirical thought,' that the actual is 'that which is bound up with the material conditions of experience, that is, with sensation,'¹⁰ that we can prove the actuality or existence of either the soul or God. But it is a postulate and the postulate underlying only one way of employing our reasoning. It does not follow that there are not other ways with other postulates. Nor does it follow that this empirical postulate itself should be given a privileged position in the functioning of reason as a whole." In fact Kant's position is quite

⁸ *ibid.*, p. 632 (A800=B828).

⁹ *ibid.*, p. 635 (A804=B832).

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 239 (A218=B266).

the reverse. When we view reason as a whole, the privileged position must be accorded to other ideals and ends.

The Primacy of Value and the Dialectic

A careful study of this part of the *Critique* makes, I think, two things entirely clear: 1) that Kant holds to the principle of the primacy of value, in other words that the reason in all its functions—in all types of its employment—is oriented towards the Good or Value. 2) that the notion of the Good or Value, although couched in moralistic phraseology, really has a wider significance. There are already, in germ, the notions of modern axiology.

This point of view, although intended primarily as a preparation for the understanding of the practical employment of the reason, as developed in the second *Critique*, is also an important standpoint for the interpretation of Kant's evaluation of the empirical and speculative employment of the reason. To this aspect we shall now turn.

The speculative employment of the reason is that aspect of reason's activity which gives the interpreter of Kant the most difficulty. If Kant could be interpreted as anti-metaphysical and positivistic the answer would be simple. Then all the ideas and reasoning of the transcendental dialectic would be indeed *transcendentaler Schein* in the full sense of the word. The words Soul, God, and the World would be *Scheinwörte*, any propositions about them *Scheinsätze*, and all reasoning of the nature of paralogisms. But Kant is too good a philosopher to do this; consequently what he gains in adequacy he loses in clarity and his position becomes puzzling. For Kant, from the very beginning of the *Critique*, there had never been any question either of the actuality, possibility, or necessity of metaphysics when properly understood and defined. It is not only a *Naturanlage*, but he adds that, should science and all culture disappear and the world sink into barbarism, metaphysics would still remain,¹¹ and at the conclusion of the *Architectonic of Pure Reason*, we are told that metaphysics is "the full and complete development of the human reason."¹² It seems quite clear then that Kant not only believed in the possibility of metaphysics, but that, if the nature of human reason is properly understood, in its

¹¹ Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 21 (Bxiv).

¹² *ibid.*, p. 665 (A850=B878).

necessity. What Kant is saying in the negative side of his philosophy is that if we abstract reason from its determining ground or end, namely, the highest good, of course there is no metaphysics. He is not saying that there is no metaphysics, but rather that there is no metaphysics for the *purely empirical understanding*.

It cannot be too strongly insisted that Kant realizes fully that, from a purely empirical standpoint, the problems of metaphysics are pseudo problems. Granting his premises, the anti-metaphysical positivist is right. At times Kant even anticipates his terminology; in one context he speaks of these problems as *sinnleeres*.¹³ It is customary for the positivist to distinguish his position from that of Kant by saying that for him metaphysical problems are not merely insoluble because of their nature, but are meaningless. Kant would agree with him that such problems *are* meaningless on his premises. For the "pure understanding," that is for reason in its purely "empirical employment" (if there is such a thing; we shall consider this point later), met-empirical or metaphysical propositions *must* be meaningless. Why? Because it is a postulate of empirical thought that the actual or the existent is "bound up with sensation." But it is only on these premises, only because of this postulate, that they are meaningless. There might be other ways of employing the reason, and other postulates which would make them quite meaningful. By definition, "existence" for the empirical employment is the sensuously observable. But this definition is merely a postulate—a "convention," so to speak, of the reason in one of its modes of employment.

Kant's position on the speculative reason may then be restated in the following modern axiological terms. Being and value are inseparable. If they are separated, if problems of being are separated from problems of value, all the problems of the dialectic become meaningless. But they really cannot be separated. To separate them means ultimate unintelligibility. This I think one of the most significant of all Kant's positions. Briefly, his argument is this. Not only, as we have seen, would the labor of transcendental investigation hardly have been undertaken were it not for their relation to problems of value, not only do they become meaningless when divorced from these problems, but indirectly

¹³ *ibid.*, p. 325 (A337=B394).

even the empirical employment of reason is stultified—and ultimately unintelligible—if separated from the dialectic and its end or norm. This is Kant's well known conception of the metaphysical ideas as regulative of the scientific activity. To this we shall now turn.

Value and the Empirical Employment of the Reason

It remains then to consider Kant's conception of the empirical employment of the understanding in this context. This is again a difficult and puzzling part of Kant's view as a whole for the reason that Kant himself is also ambiguous on this question, as we shall see. It would seem at first sight that there is a thoroughgoing dualism in his position. The speculative employment of the reason is guided by the canon of pure reason and is therefore determined by value. The empirical employment, on the other hand, is apparently *wert-frei*, and determined wholly by sense and the categories. This appears in his fundamental distinction between the constitutive character of the categories and the merely regulative function of the ideas of reason.

As we have seen, for Kant also, if we take the purely empirical employment of reason, propositions about non-empirical entities are meaningless. But that is just the point. For Kant the empirical cannot be separated from the speculative. The establishment of this fact constitutes his "deduction" or validation of the speculative ideas which, he says, "will complete the critical work of pure reason."¹⁴ Briefly stated, his position is this: The three transcendental ideas do not "determine any object corresponding to them"¹⁵ as do the categories. But they, too, are the presuppositions of empirical knowledge also; they are the indispensable conditions of experience as such, in so far as experience seeks "unity."¹⁶ Whether rightly or wrongly, then, Kant believes that the mainspring of the empirical employment of reason itself is this search for unity; that unity, as an ideal or cognitive "value," is part of the "highest good" which is the determining ground of the end of the empirical employment of the reason itself. This unity cannot be attained except by use of the metaphysical ideas as

¹⁴ Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 549 (A670=B698).

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 550 (A671=B699).

¹⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 550f. (A671f.=B699f.).



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regulative principles; consequently the empirical and the speculative are so closely bound together that they cannot be separated.

It is at this point that Kant introduces his famous *als ob* doctrine which was later to become the subject of so much discussion and, as I believe, of misrepresentation. In psychology we must proceed *as if* the mind were a simple substance endowed with personal identity. In cosmology, in so far as we seek unity in our explanations of the cosmos, we must proceed *as if* there were intelligible as well as empirical causation. In theology we must proceed *as if* the sum of all appearances (the sensible world itself) had a single, highest, and all sufficient ground beyond itself, namely, a self-subsistent, original, creative reason. Why proceed *as if*? Because it is in the light of these ideas alone "that we so guide the empirical employment of *our* reason as to secure its greatest possible extension."¹⁷ It is possible, of course, to give a "fictional" turn to this doctrine of *as if*, but when passages such as these are set in the context of the total "transcendental doctrine of method" as it has been outlined, a theory of fictions seems far indeed from Kant's mind.

In this connection a word of comment on Kant's distinction between constitutive and regulative principles is in order. There is a certain ambiguity and contradiction in his use of the notions and a disclosure of this will serve to emphasize the point I have been making. In the *Transcendental Analytic* the categories are held to be constitutive, but in the *Transcendental Dialectic* the ideas are regulative. But even in the former the constitutive and the regulative are really not separated. In his discussion of the analogies of experience we are told that these, as well as the postulates of empirical thought, are not constitutive but merely regulative,¹⁸ so that the distinction between constitutive and regulative appears within the empirical employment of reason itself. But later in the *Dialectic*¹⁹ we are told, however, that in contrast to the ideas of the *Dialectic*, which are solely regulative, these are constitutive with respect to experience. The distinction, therefore, seems to be merely relative and shifting and what is regulative in one context is constitutive in another. Kemp

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 551 (A673=B701).

¹⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 219f. (A179f.=B222f.).

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 546 (A664f.=B692f.).

Smith says that this position of Kant here must not be taken to nullify his basal distinction between the regulative and the constitutive.²⁰ I cannot accept this interpretation. I agree, to be sure, that Kant did not *mean* to nullify it, but I insist that it tends to nullify it none the less. I am inclined to think that the logic of Kant's thought here would compel him to make the ideas or ideals which condition the proper employment of the empirical reason as much constitutive of it as the postulates of empirical thought. In other words, the distinction tends to break down and this fact would emphasize, as I have said, what seem to me to be the deeper tendencies of Kant's thought—namely, that reason is all of one piece, a seamless garment, so to speak, and in its *totality* oriented towards value.

Now it is, of course, far from my purpose here to argue for the ultimately inseparable character of the empirical and speculative reason, although that is my own view, but merely to insist that this is the heart of the Kantian philosophy. What it means, of course, is that, indirectly at least, the empirical employment of the reason is also guided by the canon of pure reason, that it also is ultimately oriented towards value.

III

THE AXIOLOGICAL MOMENT IN KANT'S TOTAL PHILOSOPHY

We have now reconstructed that part of Kant to which modern axiology with its central principles and theses is the footnote. In this construction we have, to be sure, interpreted Kant's words somewhat freely at times. We have found it necessary to free his thought from its narrow moralism and we have quite frankly paraphrased Kant's own expressions of his thought in terms which he himself would probably not recognize. Nor can it be denied that there are aspects of Kant's thought which do not seem to harmonize with this interpretation. But when all this is admitted, it seems to me that the essentials of his thought stand out clearly: (a) that the pure reason itself, in all its forms, is oriented towards value; that, in his own terms, "the highest good [is] the determining ground of the ultimate end of pure reason itself";²¹

²⁰ Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to 'Kant's Critique of Pure Reason'* (London, 1923), p. 554, note 1.

²¹ Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 635 (A804=B832).

- (b) that it is only when we abstract reason from the values that determine it that the problems of metaphysics are meaningless;
- (c) that problems of value and problems of being are inseparable and that to separate them means ultimately unintelligibility.

It would seem to follow then that Kant's philosophy as a whole is determined by these fundamental principles. This is the view maintained by Kemp Smith and his interpretation is, I think, essentially valid. In speaking of Kant's "constructive views," he writes that for Kant "Existences and values do not constitute independent orders. They interpenetrate and neither can be adequately dealt with apart from the considerations appropriate to the other."²² Kemp Smith emphasizes one side of this relation, namely, that truth, being a value of universal jurisdiction, the judgments of moral and other values can claim no exemption from its criteria. I should for completeness emphasize the other side of this relation. The good or value is the determining ground of the end of all uses of the reason—even of its empirical employment, and the knowledge of existences cannot ultimately be exempt from this "canon." It is true, as Kemp Smith says, that Kant did not properly coordinate his problems and that, failing to do so, he "overemphasized the negative aspects of his logical inquiries and formulated his ethical doctrines in a needlessly dogmatic form."²³ It is in a sense true that modern axiology has, from one point of view, consisted in efforts to avoid these errors by a proper co-ordination of the problems in the two fields.

It is undoubtedly true that Kant did overemphasize the negative aspects of his logical inquiries. It is possible to read parts of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and reach the conclusion that Kant gave the death blow to all metaphysics, to all extension of thought to the met-empirical. It is possible to read parts of Kant's work and conclude that the values have no cosmological status but that we should merely act as though they did. But it is not possible to read Kant as a whole and reach these negative conclusions. It is easy to understand why he did emphasize the negative aspects. It was a fatal day when Kant enunciated the thesis that he destroyed the pretensions of knowledge so as to give place to faith. But there was a certain element of justification for it. Kant had first to show

²² Kemp Smith, *op. cit.*, p. lxi.

²³ *ibid.*, p. lxi.

the limits of the knowledge process when divorced from its ultimate end and norm before he could show its significance when directed by that end or norm. Kant never properly coordinated the two sides of his thinking, but he did suggest the way in which all such coordinations must be sought. This is one of the basal theses of this essay.

No less certain is it that he formulated his ethical doctrines in a needlessly dogmatic form. It is a striking fact that ethical thinkers quite commonly accept Kant's analysis of the moral consciousness and of ethical fact as fundamental and yet dissent violently from his formalism and dogmatism. Here, too, we can understand why this dogmatism, although needless, should nevertheless have appeared. It was not merely that, having driven dogmatism out of the door in his negative critique, it came back through the window as it usually does. It was rather, I think, that in his practical philosophy he did not rightly coordinate his problems as the thinking of the canon should have suggested. For Kant subjectivism of values could, apparently, be met only by a dogmatism which erected secondary moral principles into eternal forms. In fact all that was necessary was to emphasize the objectivity of the good or value from which these principles spring. Had Kant seen all the implications of the *Canon*, this is the direction which his thought must have taken. With the primacy of the Good established in *all* functions of the reason, it would follow necessarily that the notion would be primary in the moral reason also.

IV

KANT AND THE EUROPEAN TRADITION

The axiological movement as a whole of which, as we have seen, Kant is in a sense the inspiration consists in restoring the notion of the Good to the central position which it had in classical European philosophy. The three notes—the movement to objectivity, the development of the notion of knowledge (intuition) of values, and the working out of the problem of the relation of value to being, are all indications of this fact. The fact that so much of modern axiology is Platonic in spirit and essence is evidence of this movement towards restoration. It may be of significance in

conclusion to discuss the relation of Kant to this great European tradition.

First of all it must be clearly realized that, as has been pointed out repeatedly, the doctrine of the primacy of value or of the value categories is a constant note of that tradition. As Hartmann says, "Many thinkers, with a correct feeling for the puzzling categorial superiority of values to principles of Being, have given precedence in their systems to values. Preeminently Plato, in that he raised the idea of the good to the apex of the realm of ideas, allowed values to 'rise above Existence in strength and dignity'; likewise, Aristotle in the principle of the *νόος*, as the highest perfection and of the *ἀριστον*; so, too, the Stoics in the twofold concept of the logos as the primal principle both of morality *and* of the cosmos; in the same way, the masters of scholasticism, in so far as they accepted the *ens realissimum* and *ens perfectissimum* as identical. But even Kant with his primacy of the practical reason gave precedence to values, as well as did Fichte and Hegel, who established on this basis a teleological dialectic of universal reason. Everywhere, except with difference of form, the axiological principle is made the foundation of the whole."²⁴

"Even Kant with his primacy of practical reason gave precedence to values." The point I have been making is that he gave precedence in the pure or theoretical reason also. It is at this point that Kant, more than anywhere else, shows his kinship with the continuous European tradition. If my interpretation of the axiological element in the Kantian philosophy is sound, Kant's whole procedure, when all three *Critiques* are taken into consideration, may be looked upon as a reinterpretation of that tradition.

It is often held that Kant represents the final break with that tradition, a break which was supposedly begun with Descartes and continued in the British empiricism of Locke and Hume. This seems to me to misrepresent the situation grievously. European rationalism is in its essence a continuation of that tradition. Modern studies in Descartes, Leibniz, and Spinoza are making it increasingly clear that the notion of the inseparability of value and being, of the *ens realissimum* from the *ens perfectissimum*, is as much the tacit assumption of their thinking as of any of their

²⁴ Hartmann, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 24f.

predecessors. Kant's philosophy was not a break with that tradition. It was rather a restatement of it in a new form—a form which he rightly or wrongly believed to be necessitated by the developments both of dogmatic rationalism and of sceptical empiricism. But scepticism always bulked much larger as an issue in Kant's thought than did dogmatism, and it is this scepticism that he has chiefly in mind.

I began my discussion by reference to the statement that European philosophy consists chiefly in a series of footnotes to Plato. Is then the Kantian philosophy as a whole such a footnote? There can be little doubt I think that the general tendency is now to think more and more in this way. It was only natural that Kant's thought should first have been viewed largely in the context of purely modern problems, as an attempt critically to mediate between the two streams of rationalism and empiricism and thereby to create a third and new standpoint. Nevertheless I believe this to have been, although a natural, none the less a narrow perspective. I think one of the most outstanding characters of Kant's more intimate moods is his piety towards *philosophia perennis*. It is not merely that he goes out of his way to give expression to that piety, although that in itself is significant. It is rather that he obviously feels himself, at crucial points, at one with that tradition. Kant's philosophy, when viewed as a whole, is a continuation of that tradition—a tradition which was not really broken until the complete disjunction of problems of being from problems of value which marks our modernistic era of evolutionary naturalism.

XIV

A REASSESSMENT OF KANT'S
AESTHETIC THEORY

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A REASSESSMENT OF KANT'S AESTHETIC THEORY

IT has long been recognized that the central argument of the first *Critique* can really be appreciated only in the light of the rationalistic and empirical traditions which inspired Kant's epistemological and metaphysical inquiries. Similarly, Kant's aesthetic theories take on new meaning if they are set in cultural perspective and interpreted in the light of his own larger philosophical enterprise. For an adequate orientation and appraisal of Kant's treatment of beauty and art the reader must be referred to such extended works as Victor Basch's *Essai critique sur l'esthétique de Kant* (1927) or the treatises of Otto Schlapp¹ and Hermann Cohen.² All that I shall attempt to do in this essay is briefly to indicate the ways in which three aspects of eighteenth century culture seem, however indirectly, to have influenced Kant's thought, and to enumerate, with passing comment, those of his aesthetic doctrines which seem to me to possess present-day and, I believe, lasting significance.³

I

Kant's early essay, *Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen*, has great cultural interest as a typical eighteenth

¹ Kants *Lehre vom Genie und die Entstehung der "Kritik der Urteilskraft"* (Göttingen, 1901).

² Kants *Begründung der Aesthetik* (Berlin, 1889).

³ Every reassessment of earlier theories is bound to reflect the interests and ideology of the critic and his age. But some critics are more successful re-creatively than others. Bosanquet's chapter on Kant in his *History of Aesthetics* is a resolute and, on the whole, a successful endeavor to do justice to Kant's doctrines, though his frame of reference is quite properly his own idealistic metaphysics and his own interpretation of art and beauty. Hegel's treatment of Kant in the *Introduction to his Philosophy of Fine Art*, on the other hand, and Croce's chapter on Kant in his *Aesthetic*, tell us little about Kant's own thought and are concerned chiefly with the exposition and defense of the beliefs of the historians in question. The purpose of the present essay is primarily expository and appreciative; I have for the most part tried to emphasize the elements of strength in Kant's position rather than its deficiencies, and to summarize his positive contributions, so far as possible, in his own words. But the selection of these doctrines and my comments on them have of course been determined by my own beliefs and criteria which, obviously, cannot here be explicitly formulated or defended.

century document. Its importance for Kantian exegesis lies in the clear indication it gives that Kant's first approach to the subject was primarily psychological and sociological. The essay opens with a general characterization of the beautiful and the sublime as contrasting qualities and then proceeds to relate them to generic human faculties, dispositions, and temperaments:

"Understanding is sublime, wit is beautiful. Courage is sublime and great; cunning, small but beautiful. . . . Sublime attributes inspire respect, those of beauty, love. . . . He who inclines to the melancholy . . . has preeminently a feeling for the sublime; . . . he whose disposition is sanguine has a predominant feeling for beauty."⁴

The sexes are next compared in terms of beauty and sublimity:

"The fair [*schöne*] sex has understanding as well as the male, but its understanding is beautiful, while ours is supposed to be profound—a term which is a synonym for the sublime.

✓ . . . The beauty of women is a beautiful virtue, that of the male sex is said to be a noble virtue."⁵

There follows a description of national and racial proclivities for the sublime and the beautiful:

"Among the nations in our part of the world the Italians and the French are, in my opinion, those who have the most feeling for beauty, the Germans, English and Spaniards, for sublimity. . . . A cursory glance at other portions of the world reveals the Arab as the noblest man in the Orient. . . . The Persians are the Frenchmen of Asia. They are good poets, polite, and possess a reasonably fine taste. . . . The Negroes of Africa have no feeling for nature which transcends the merely trivial. . . . Among the savages no tribes exhibit as sublime a mental disposition as those of North America. . . ."⁶

The essay ends with a typical eighteenth century estimate of the ancient, mediaeval, and modern periods:

⁴ *Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen* (Berlin, 1903), Bd. II, pp. 211, 220, 222. I have ignored Kant's italics in translating the passages quoted from this essay.

⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 229, 231.

⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 243, 25f.

"If, in conclusion, we survey the course of history, we find man's taste, like Proteus, assuming ever-changing forms. The ancient times of the Greeks and Romans gave clear evidence of a genuine feeling for beauty as well as for the sublime, in poetry, sculpture, architecture, legislation and even in morals. The reign of the Roman Caesars transformed both the beautiful and the sublime in their simplicity into splendor and then into spurious glitter. . . . The barbarians, once established, introduced a certain perverse taste which is called the Gothic, and which culminated in the grotesque. . . . In our own day we see beginning to flourish a true taste for the beautiful and the sublime, in the arts and sciences as well as in morals."⁷

The essay is full of such provocative comparisons and shrewd observations, and it often anticipates, in a general way, doctrines later developed by Kant with power and precision.⁸ The *Critique of Judgment*, in contrast, is devoted to rigorous analysis and interpretation. Here, as in the first *Critique*, Kant is intent on isolating a generic type of human experience and on discovering its larger significance, and it is to this analysis and interpretation that we must, of course, look for his most valuable contributions to aesthetic theory. We must not forget, however, that Kant never ceased to value the more empirical and cultural approach.⁹ This is evident in his praise, in the *Critique of Judgment*,¹⁰ of Burke's essay *On the Sublime and Beautiful*, in his varied illustrations, and in his references, here and elsewhere, to French, German, and English writers and critics,¹¹ many of whom were not professional philosophers. We must not be led by the austerity of Kant's later

⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 255f.

⁸ cf. R. W. Bretall, "Kant's Theory of the Sublime," below, p. 384n.

⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 379-389.

¹⁰ *Critique of Judgment* (London, 1892), Bernard's tr., pp. 147f. All my quotations from the *Critique of Judgment* are from this translation, but I have not followed Bernard in his capitalization of such words as Beauty, Goodness, etc., where such capitalization seems arbitrary.

¹¹ Croce's statement that ". . . Kant was minutely familiar with eighteenth century writers who discussed beauty and taste" (*Aesthetic* [London, 1922], Ainslie's tr., p. 279) is amply justified. Otto Schlapp (*Kants Lehre vom Genie*, pp. 403f.) lists, among the writers to whom Kant refers: Gottsched, Lessing, Klopstock, Herder, Gellert, Wieland, Brockes, Haller, Addison, Pope, Milton, Shakespeare, Voltaire, Rousseau, Montesquieu, Hutcheson, Hume, Burke, Home, Gerard, Blair, Fontenelle, Trublet, Batteux, Meier, Winckelmann, Sulzer, Mengs.

style or by his formalistic doctrines to forget that he himself tried, to the best of his ability, to obey the injunction implicit in his own famous doctrine that concepts without percepts are empty, percepts without concepts, blind. To divorce his aesthetic theories from their cultural and empirical setting is to court those very errors of rationalistic abstraction for which Kant, often without warrant, has been censured by his critics.

II

The *Analytic* of the third *Critique* insists repeatedly, it will be recalled, upon the uniqueness of beauty, taste, and aesthetic satisfaction. Despite the "universality" and "necessity" of the judgment of taste, taste is declared to be non-conceptual, and beauty, it is urged, can be brought into being not by mere obedience to rule, but only by nature or by man's creative genius. And though the creation of and the response to significant beauty are not unrelated to the moral virtues, beauty as such is under no circumstances to be identified with the morally good. Finally, though beauty arouses intense delight and invites continued contemplation, this aesthetic satisfaction is not to be confused with mere sensuous pleasure or non-aesthetic emotional response; in Kant's somewhat misleading phrase, "the pure judgment of taste is independent of charm and emotion." In these characterizations of the aesthetic experience and its object, Kant's thought is oriented to three main artistic and critical movements which, in combination, determined the aesthetic atmosphere of the eighteenth century: neoclassicism, which originated in the Renaissance, dominated the seventeenth century, and, duly transformed, continued to exercise a profound influence throughout the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries; romanticism, eloquently exemplified in the writings of its great apostle, Jean Jacques Rousseau, and destined to become the characteristic movement of the nineteenth century; and that most typical eighteenth century mode of thought which expressed itself in the rococo style, the lovely and fragile flowering of the seventeenth century baroque. However explicit or implicit may have been Kant's awareness of these movements, the fact remains that his interpretation of man's aesthetic experience and its characteristic object relates itself to them with surprising precision. What he actually succeeds in do-

ing is, on the one hand, to condemn the errors of neoclassic intellectualism and moralism, of romantic individualism and emotionalism, and of the rococo penchant for prettiness and extraneous decoration, and, on the other hand, to recognize many of the positive achievements of each of these artistic and critical movements.

The "classical," or, less ambiguously, the "neoclassic" movement was dedicated to what its disciples conceived to be the moral and cultural ideals of Greek and Roman antiquity and to the Cartesian principles of order, discipline, and intellectual clarity. Its temper was essentially traditional, on the one hand, philosophical, on the other. Witness the allegiance of Racine, Corneille, and their imitators and critics to the Aristotelian principles of dramatic construction, or the interpretation of classical themes in the paintings of Poussin. The effect of this ideology and discipline upon the great geniuses of the seventeenth century was a genuine assimilation of ancient wisdom, an unusual clarity, stateliness, and serenity of artistic form, and great profundity of artistic content. On lesser minds, and notably in the eighteenth century, their effect was less fortunate; they led to an academic preoccupation with rules and a passion for formal correctness often issuing in artistic sterility. The French Academy, established by order of the king in 1635, was the social embodiment of this movement and the concrete exemplification of both its strength and its weaknesses. The latter are well summarized in Lanfrey's estimate of the influence of the Academy upon French literature:

"... the French Academy seems to have received from its founders the special mission to transform genius into *bel esprit*, and it would be hard to produce a man of talent whom it has not demoralized. . . . If we examine its influence on the national genius, we shall see that it has given it a flexibility, a brilliance, a polish, which it never possessed before; but it has done so at the expense of its masculine qualities, its originality, its spontaneity, its vigour, its natural grace. It sees in taste, not a sense of the beautiful, but a certain type of correctness, an elegant form of mediocrity."¹²

¹² P. Lanfrey, *Histoire de Napoléon*, quoted by Francis Storr in the article on "Academies" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th ed., Vol. I, p. 102.

We would, perhaps, hardly expect a rationalistically-minded philosopher, himself a prophet of the Age of Reason, to be critical of this intellectualistic tradition. Yet Kant was keenly aware of its weaknesses, as is evident from such a passage as the following:

“There can be no objective rule of taste which shall determine by means of concepts what is beautiful. . . . To seek for a principle of taste which shall furnish, by means of definite concepts, a universal criterion of the beautiful, is fruitless trouble; because what is sought is impossible and self-contradictory. . . . If a man reads me a poem of his or brings me to a play, which does not on the whole suit my taste, he may bring forward in proof of the beauty of his poem Batteux or Lessing or still more ancient and famous critics of taste, and all the rules laid down by them; certain passages which displease me may agree very well with rules of beauty (as they have been put forth by these writers and are universally recognized): but I stop my ears, I will listen to no arguments and no reasoning; and I will rather assume that these rules of the critics are false, or at least that they do not apply to the case in question, than admit that my judgment should be determined by grounds of proof *a priori*. For it is to be a judgment of taste and not of understanding or reason.”¹³

This insistence upon the inability of reason to formulate rules for the critical appraisal of art is accompanied by a recognition that original genius is the only source of true artistic creation. Kant was, in short, completely sympathetic to one of the central theses of the romantic movement which, in 1790, was still in its infancy:

“*Genius* is the innate mental disposition (*ingenium*) through which nature gives the rule to art. . . . [It is] a talent for producing that for which no definite rule can be given. . . . Hence *originality* must be its first property. . . . The author of a product for which he is indebted to his genius does not know himself how he has come by his [aesthetical] Ideas; and he has not the power to devise the like at pleasure or in ac-

¹³ *Critique of Judgment*, pp. 84, 158. cf. *ibid.*, pp. 190ff., 203ff., etc.

cordance with a plan, and to communicate it to others in precepts that will enable them to produce similar products."¹⁴

Kant's receptiveness to the spirit of romanticism is further evidenced by his enthusiasm for natural grandeur. Though he gave his own distinctive interpretation to man's sense of sublimity in the presence of soaring peaks and the storm-tossed sea, his vicarious¹⁵ interest in these phenomena is characteristically romantic in character. So is his fondness for travellers' accounts of foreign lands¹⁶ and his idealization of the "noble savage" of North America. It is, indeed, not without significance that Kant should have singled out Rousseau from among all his contemporaries for special affection and respect, reading his books with avidity and wearing a picture of him in a locket.

But Kant was not blind to the excesses of romantic emotionalism or the follies of undisciplined genius. Though his wholesale exclusion of emotion as irrelevant to the aesthetic experience¹⁷ is a mistake into which he was led by his analytical preoccupation with what was entirely unique to the aesthetic transaction, it is clear that he has merely overshot the mark. Desiring to exclude from consideration aesthetically *irrelevant* emotion and to correct the common romantic identification of aesthetic satisfaction with artistically uncontrolled emotional response, Kant failed to recognize the essential rôle of emotion in both artistic creation and aesthetic response. But, granting the inadequacy of his analysis, he erred in the right direction. For beauty is certainly not present in all objects that are emotionally appealing; it is indeed a unique quality whose locus is aesthetic form, i.e. the aesthetically satisfying organization of sensuous or other material. And true aesthetic response, expressing itself in the judgment of taste, is certainly an unique type of satisfaction occasioned by a distinctive intuition of a distinctive type of object. Kant's critique of emotionalism in art provided a much needed corrective to contemporary romantic bathos and might still be read with profit by critics and philoso-

¹⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 188ff.

¹⁵ He never saw a mountain and was never on the ocean.

¹⁶ cf. e.g., his references to W. Marsden's *History of Sumatra* (1783), M. Savary's *Lettres sur l'Egypte* (1787), and H. B. de Saussure's *Voyages dans les Alpes* (1779-86) (*Critique of Judgment*, pp. 99, 112, 131).

¹⁷ "Emotion . . . does not belong at all to beauty" (*ibid.*, p. 76). cf. *ibid.*, pp. 72f.

phers of art who would reduce the aesthetic experience to undifferentiated emotional response.

His criticism of the romantic doctrine that genius must be untrammelled by discipline is shrewd and caustic:

“Since the originality of the talent constitutes an essential (though not the only) element in the character of genius, shallow heads believe that they cannot better show themselves to be full-blown geniuses than by throwing off the constraint of all rules; they believe, in effect, that one could make a braver show on the back of a wild horse than on the back of a trained animal.”¹⁸

While admitting, indeed urging, that it is the productive imagination alone which is able to bring new beauty into existence,¹⁹ Kant is equally insistent that the imagination can function effectively only through the mastery of a technique and with the aid of an academic discipline:

“. . . There is no beautiful art in which there is not a mechanical element that can be comprehended by rules and followed accordingly, and in which therefore there must be something *scholastic* as an essential condition. . . . Genius can only furnish rich *material* for products of beautiful art; its execution and its *form* require talent cultivated in the schools, in order to make such a use of this material as will stand examination by the [aesthetic] judgment.”²⁰

Training in technique, then, *does* involve the learning of certain rules and practice in their application. Genius can be truly stimulated and educated, however, only through contact with the products of genius. The creative artist must go to the works of the artists and use these

“as a model, not to be *copied* [*Nachmachung*] but to be *imitated* [*Nachahmung*]. How this is possible is hard to explain.

¹⁸ *Critique of Judgment*, p. 192.

¹⁹ Croce's claim that Kant “knows nothing of a genuinely productive imagination, imagination in the proper sense” (*op. cit.*, p. 277) is not substantiated by a careful reading of Kant's account of genius. cf., e.g., *ibid.*, §49. The *Critique*, meanwhile, offers a valuable corrective to Croce's hasty rejection of numerous distinctions which are basic to aesthetic analysis.

²⁰ *Critique of Judgment*, pp. 192f.

The Ideas of the artist excite like Ideas in his pupils if nature has endowed them with a like proportion of their mental powers. Hence models of beautiful art are the only means of handing down these Ideas to posterity. . . . The product of a genius (as regards what is to be ascribed to genius and not to possible learning or schooling) is an example, not to be imitated²¹ (for then that which in it is genius . . . would be lost), but to be followed, by another genius; whom it awakens to a feeling of his own originality and whom it stirs so to exercise his art in freedom from the constraint of rules, that thereby a new rule is gained for art, and thus his talent shows itself to be exemplary.”²²

I have quoted these passages in order to indicate the care with which Kant attempts to adjudicate the apparently rival but actually complementary emphases of the neoclassic and the romantic traditions, the one on discipline and convention, the other on freedom and originality. That he was sensitive to this conflict is evident in two additional passages, both of which clearly indicate his final sympathy for the neoclassic tradition, wisely interpreted. In the first he is discussing the relation of genius and taste:

“To ask whether it is more important for the things of beautiful art that genius or taste should be displayed, is the same as to ask whether in it more depends on imagination or on judgment. . . . In respect of the first an art is rather said to be *full of spirit* but only deserves to be called a *beautiful* art on account of the second. . . . All the abundance of [original Ideas of the creative imagination] produces in lawless freedom nothing but nonsense; on the other hand, the judgment [of taste] is the faculty by which it is adjusted to the understanding. Taste, like the judgment in general, is the discipline (or training) of genius; it clips its wings, it makes it cultured and polished; but, at the same time, it gives guidance as to where and how far it may extend itself, if it is to remain purposive.

²¹ *Nachahmung*, in the sense of literal copying. “This imitation becomes a mere *aping* [*Nachäffung*], if the scholar *copies* everything down to the deformities, which the genius must have let pass only because he could not well remove them without weakening his Idea” (*ibid.*, p. 204).

²² *ibid.*, pp. 192, 203f.

And while it brings clearness and order into the multitude of the thoughts [of genius], it makes the [aesthetic] Ideas susceptible of being permanently and, at the same time, universally assented to, and capable of being followed by others, and of an ever-progressive culture. If, then, in the conflict of these two properties . . . something must be sacrificed, it should be rather on the side of genius."²³

The second passage deals with the manner in which genius must be educated if it is to be productive of significant art:

"The propaedeutic to all beautiful art, regarded in the highest degree of its perfection, seems to lie, not in precepts, but in the culture of the mental powers by means of those elements of knowledge called *humaniora*, probably because *humanity* on the one side indicates the universal *feeling of sympathy*, and on the other the faculty of being able to *communicate* universally our inmost [feelings]. For these properties taken together constitute the characteristic social spirit of humanity by which it is distinguished from the limitations of animal life. . . . Hence it appears plain that the true propaedeutic for the foundation of taste is the development of moral Ideas and the culture of the moral feeling. . . ."²⁴

Whatever we may think of Kant's final defense of a disciplined taste or his insistence upon the artist's need for moral cultivation, we must admit his recognition of both the strength and the limitations of the neoclassic and the romantic emphases, and admire his masterly synthesis of the best elements in these contemporary movements.

The genteel tradition of the eighteenth century, meanwhile, expressed itself in rococo art, a style whose most typical manifestations are to be found in the minor arts of landscape gardening, interior decoration, furniture, and personal attire. It was *par excellence* the style of the politely cultured aristocrat—at its best, hardly to be excelled in grace, delicacy, and charm—at its worst, showy, superficial, and sensual. That miracle of blue, silver, and glass in the Amalienburg, the gardens of the Residenz in Würzburg with their charming *putti*, and the ceilings of Tiepolo all exemplify

²³ *Critique of Judgment*, pp. 205f.

²⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 254f.

the loveliness of the rococo style in those arts whose function it was to create an appropriate setting for the gatherings and fêtes of the period.

Kant was probably not familiar with the most eloquent instances of rococo art, though excellent examples of ironwork, porcelain, furniture, etc., in the rococo style existed at the time in Königsberg. There are many indications, however, that he was sensitive to the rococo temper in its more social and decorative manifestations. His response to it was at once sympathetic and critical; he recognized its charm, condemned its excesses, and censured it, even in its purer forms, for a lack of deeper spiritual significance.

In his own modest and restrained way, Kant was a perfect eighteenth century gentleman. His biographers testified after his death to the care which he bestowed on his personal attire and the *politesse* which characterized his frequent dinner parties.²⁵ More significant is his choice, as examples of "free" beauty, of natural and artificial objects for which the rococo spirit entertained a special affection. By "free" beauty Kant means "pure" beauty, that is, form which, in and of itself, makes an immediate aesthetic appeal; "free" beauty is thus contrasted with "adherent" beauty, whose appraisal involves an additional reference to moral, cultural, utilitarian or other considerations involving the use of conceptual criteria:

"Flowers are free natural beauties. . . . Many birds (such as the parrot, the humming bird, the bird of paradise), and many sea shells are beauties . . . which . . . please freely and in themselves. So also delineations *à la grecque*, foliage for borders or wall-papers . . . are free beauties. We can refer to the same class what are called in music phantasies (i.e. pieces without any theme), and in fact all music without words."²⁶

²⁵ Immanuel Kant, *sein Leben in Darstellungen von Zeitgenossen* (Berlin, 1912). cf. Kant's discussion of those "charming arts that can gratify a company at table" (*Critique of Judgment*, pp. 186f.).

²⁶ *Critique of Judgment*, p. 81. cf. his references to "pleasure gardens, room decorations, all kinds of tasteful furniture" (*ibid.*, p. 98). Kant also admired objects whose beauty was "free" in the sense of informal, and, on this score, clearly preferred the studied spontaneity of the English garden to the symmetry and precision of the typical French rococo garden. But it is not this type of "freedom" with which Kant is here primarily concerned.

This inclusion of pure music within the category of "free" beauty is particularly revealing. His analysis of music as an expressive vehicle is admirable as far as it goes, and his recognition of the delight which it conveys is unequivocal:

"As [tonal] modulation is as it were a universal language of sensations intelligible to every man, the art of tone employs it by itself alone in its full force, viz. as a language of the affections, and thus communicates universally according to the laws of association the aesthetical Ideas naturally combined therewith. Now these aesthetical Ideas are not concepts or determinate thoughts. Hence the form of the composition of these sensations (harmony and melody) only serves instead of the form of language, by means of their proportionate accordance, to express the aesthetical Idea of a connected whole of an unspeakable wealth of thought, corresponding to a certain theme which produces the dominating affection in the piece. . . . [Music thus produces] a continual movement and animation of the mind, by means of affections consonant therewith, and thus a delightful personal enjoyment."²⁷

In short, music is declared to be the "purest" (or "freest") of the major arts and aesthetically the most pleasing. Here we have, then, a clear indication of Kant's estimate of pure artistic form and, by implication, of rococo art as aesthetically satisfying decoration. This commendation is immediately followed, however, by a criticism of music and of other types of "free" beauty as lacking larger moral or cultural import:

- “If, on the other hand, we estimate the worth of the beautiful arts by the culture they supply to the mind . . . music
- will have the lowest place among them (as it has perhaps the highest among those arts which are valued for their pleasantness), because it merely plays with sensations.”²⁸

This estimate of music is, of course, occasioned in part by Kant's confessed lack of musical sensitivity; he is known to have understood and enjoyed music least of all the arts. His failure to recognize its expressive potentialities also indicates his rationalistic

²⁷ *Critique of Judgment*, pp. 218f.

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 219.

conviction that man's most significant experiences can be expressed and communicated only verbally, with an explicit appeal to concepts. We shall have occasion to discuss this conviction and Kant's own fragmentary critique of it in due course. It is clear, meanwhile, that, interpreting music in particular and "free" beauty in general as he did, as no more than an aesthetically agreeable play of sensations induced by the formal arrangement of sensuous qualities, he was bound to censure pure beauty for its lack of moral and spiritual significance. Just as, philosophically, Kant was fundamentally a rationalist, despite his recognition of the limits of pure reason, so, both by temperament and training, he was essentially a moralist with a profound sense for moral and spiritual values. Hence, though he never indulged in a puritanical condemnation of sensuous pleasures as such, and though he was more successful than any other eighteenth century thinker in defending the autonomy of beauty, taste, and aesthetic satisfaction, he was, none the less, bound to regard the aesthetic experience in all its purity as less valuable than the moral experience as he conceived of it, and to ascribe less cultural significance to "free" beauty than to instances of "adherent" beauty which possess deeper human significance.

Kant's critique of music applies, as we have said, to all forms of "free" beauty and specifically to the rococo in its purely decorative aspects. The art of the rococo, meanwhile, was, with notable exceptions, not only more pleasing than profound—it was also given to a type of adornment and embellishment which contravened strictly aesthetic principles of structural unity. Witness the tendency of German rococo architectural decoration to become an end in itself at the expense of architectural integrity, and of rococo sculpture and painting to emphasize surface texture and prettiness of color rather than the expressive organic unity of the work as a whole. This description does not, we must repeat, apply to the noblest examples of eighteenth century rococo in either the major or the minor arts, but it is applicable to much that was executed in this style and, presumably, to many works which found their way to Königsberg. Kant's explicit refusal to define strictly aesthetic response to pure beauty in terms of "charm" is pertinent

to this aspect of rococo art and is indicative of a genuine artistic insight on his part. Aesthetic taste, he declares,

“is always barbaric which needs a mixture of *charms*²⁹ and *emotions* in order that there may be [aesthetic] satisfaction, and still more so if it make these the measure of its assent. Nevertheless charms are often not only taken account of in the case of beauty (which properly speaking ought merely to be concerned with form) as contributory to the aesthetical universal satisfaction; but they are passed off as in themselves beauties. . . .”³⁰

His criticism of the view “which fallaciously put[s] forward charm not merely as a necessary ingredient of beauty, but as alone sufficient [to justify] a thing’s being called beautiful,”³¹ reveals shrewdness of aesthetic observation and analysis:

“A mere color, e.g. the green of a grass plot, a mere tone (as distinguished from sound and noise) like that of a violin, are by most people described as beautiful in themselves; although both seem to have at their basis merely the matter of representations, viz. simply sensation, and therefore only deserve to be called pleasant.”³²

This rejection of pure sensuous quality as possessing, in and of itself, and apart from all artistic organization, genuine artistic quality is paralleled by his refusal to find beauty in mere geometrical regularity:

“Geometrically regular figures, such as a circle, a square, a cube, etc., are commonly adduced by critics of taste as the simplest and most indisputable examples of beauty. . . . [But] hardly any one will say that a man must have taste in order that he should find more satisfaction in a circle than in a scrawled outline, in an equilateral and equiangular quadrilateral than in one which is oblique, irregular, and as it were deformed, for this belongs to the ordinary understanding and is not taste at all. . . . [Indeed,] all stiff regularity (such as

²⁹ *Critique of Judgment*, p. 72.

³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 73.

³¹ *ibid.*, p. 73.

approximates to mathematical regularity) has something in it repugnant to taste . . . [and] produces weariness.”³²

This fundamental distinction between the primary raw material of art (which is merely pleasing) and pure geometrical forms (which may or may not be pleasing), on the one hand, and true artistic form, i.e. the organization of these sensuous qualities and geometrical shapes into a pattern characterized by beauty, on the other, was one which Plato failed to make³³ and which is even today frequently lost sight of.

Kant then proceeds to criticize an inartistic reliance on ornament (the curse of bad rococo), and again with discrimination:

“Even what we call *ornaments* (parerga), i.e. those things which do not belong to the complete representation of the object internally as elements but only externally as complements, and which augment the satisfaction of taste, do so only by their form; as for example the frames of pictures or the draperies of statues or the colonnades of palaces. But if the ornament does not itself consist in beautiful form, and if it is used as a golden frame is used, merely to recommend the painting by its *charm*, it is then called *finery* and injures genuine beauty.”³⁴

Kant's illustrations here are somewhat unfortunate and his conception of artistic form and its ingredients and conditions leaves much to be desired.³⁵ He must be credited, however, with having recognized, a century and a half before the rediscovery of “significant form,” that beauty in art does not depend upon superficial and unintegrated embellishment but is essentially a function of that type of artistic organization in which each part is “organically” related to the artistic whole—that art has aesthetic integrity, in short, only in proportion as it depends upon the artistic organization of its primary medium, not on the charm of extraneous ornament, mere sensuous quality, or mathematical regularity.

³² *ibid.*, pp. 97, 99.

³³ *Philebus*, 51b.

³⁴ *Critique of Judgment*, p. 76.

³⁵ cf. Barrows Dunham, “Kant's Theory of Aesthetic Form,” below.

This very incomplete account of Kant's orientation to his cultural milieu will at least, it is hoped, have given some indication that he was not, despite his confining intellectual labors, unaware of current artistic and critical tendencies, and that, whatever his deficiencies in artistic sensitivity and cultivation, he yet possessed remarkable aesthetic insight and critical judgment.

III

Before attempting to evaluate some of Kant's central aesthetic doctrines, we must say a word about his main objectives in the third volume of his great trilogy, for it is only in terms of these objectives that his argument can fairly be understood or appraised. Even in the first and second *Critiques*, he has frequently been censured for failing to do what, for better or for worse, he never attempted to do. His chief concern, in each of the three *Critiques*, was to isolate in turn the most essential of man's generic experiences, to analyze these experiences with an eye to their distinctive characteristics, to formulate with precision the *a priori* conditions which must obtain for these experiences to be possible, and gradually to construct a synoptic metaphysic which would serve, on the one hand, to define the ontological status of the "objects" of these experiences and, on the other hand, to relate these several "objects" and types of experience to one another.

The experience subjected to scrutiny in the first *Critique* is man's normal sense-perception of the physical world and the extension of sense-perception in the scientific exploration of natural events. Kant was, of course, aware of the fact that both our everyday perceptions and our scientific inquiries are volitionally motivated and that they arouse in us various emotions and occasion feelings of pleasure and pain. These aspects of man's actual experiences are ignored, however, as not strictly relevant to perceptual and scientific cognition as such. In the second *Critique* man's moral experience is similarly isolated, analyzed, and interpreted. No exhaustive description of social conduct in its concrete setting is attempted; once again Kant hews to the line in his determination to focus our attention upon the *distinctive* characteristics of moral motivation and moral value. Hence his rejection of pleasure and utility as not essential to moral quality. What is essential, in Kant's opinion, is the moral motive in all its purity, the objective

reality of moral value, and freedom as the condition of moral thought and action.

Having completed the second *Critique* Kant was aware (a) that he had thus far neglected man's aesthetic experience, (b) that scientific inquiry necessitates in addition a teleological principle of interpretation which calls for philosophical analysis, and (c) that the relation of the phenomenal world of sense-perception and scientific study to the noumenal realm of moral value invites further investigation. The *Critique of Judgment* is devoted to a consideration of these three problems. Part I deals primarily not with art but with the more synoptic problem of beauty, whether natural or artificial, and with man's aesthetic response to beauty of both types. It also considers the mysterious activity of original genius and nature's still more mysterious production of natural loveliness, and it treats at some length of man's sense of the sublime in the presence of natural grandeur. Part II, which is dedicated to an examination of the teleological concept of purposiveness as applicable to living organisms, and more precariously to nature as a whole, does not here concern us. These investigations lead Kant, not unwillingly, into metaphysical speculation as to the most reasonable ultimate explanation for the appearance on earth of artistic and natural beauty, and for the happy conformity of nature to man's more specific cognitive requirements. His conclusion, always expressed undogmatically and with due qualifications, is that these phenomena are most plausibly to be explained by the assumption that reality is at heart teleological and that it reveals its inmost nature to us not only in the dictates of our moral consciousness but also in natural beauty and organic structure, on the one hand, and in man's creation of and response to beauty, on the other.

We shall be doing justice to Kant's aesthetic theories only if, in considering them, we keep these larger objectives of his in mind and observe what, as his argument develops, he was and was not attempting to achieve. It is also wise to examine his doctrines, so far as possible, in the order of their presentation, for, despite a great deal of repetition and considerable stylistic awkwardness, he was no mean dialectician and knew how to insinuate himself into a complex problem and how to deal with its several ingredients in proper sequence. Thus Part I opens with an analytical description

first of taste and then of the sense of sublimity as the two generic types of aesthetic response; it proceeds to a "deduction" of the aesthetic judgment, in which appeal is made to the "faculties" of understanding and imagination whose cognitive function is already familiar to students of the first *Critique*; and it is only after these analyses and preliminary interpretations have been completed that he explores, with empirical keenness and speculative audacity, the nature and metaphysical significance of genius, art, and natural beauty.

IV

I shall presume the reader's acquaintance with the main trend of Kant's argument and confine myself to a brief recapitulation and discussion of five of Kant's aesthetic doctrines which seem to me to possess unusual importance. These are (1) his fourfold characterization of taste, (2) his subjectivistic interpretation of beauty, (3) his doctrine of aesthetical Ideas, (4) his treatment of beauty and sublimity in their relation to one another, and (5) his three-fold explanation of beauty, taste, and genius.

1. Kant's first undertaking, we have said, is to isolate taste and beauty and to define, as precisely as possible, their unique and distinguishing characteristics. He realizes that "taste is merely a judging and not a productive faculty" and that the correlate of taste, i.e. beauty, is "not a work of beautiful art"³⁰ considered in its entirety. In short, he deliberately limits himself, at the outset, to an analysis of aesthetic recreation, regarded as a generic type of response, and of that pervasive quality, called beauty, which is the generic object of such response. His description of beauty as the object of a "disinterested" satisfaction (*First Moment*), as "universally and necessarily pleasing without any concept" (*Second and Fourth Moments*), and as "the form of the purposiveness of an object without any representation of a purpose" (*Third Moment*) is, I believe, quite correct if it is interpreted in the light of what Kant himself wished to assert and deny.

In describing taste as disinterested he has in mind three specific types of "interest" which, strictly defined, are indeed neither aesthetic themselves nor integral to what Kant calls pure aesthetic satisfaction. These are the interests associated with (a) utilitarian

³⁰ *Critique of Judgment*, p. 196.

and hedonic ends, (b) moral conduct and motivation, and (c) social intercourse and communication. He does not deny that genuinely aesthetic response may profitably be combined with each or all of these non-aesthetic interests; he merely insists that it cannot correctly be defined in terms of them. Aesthetic satisfaction is, in short, unique³⁷ and must be recognized as such. Had some of Kant's successors not lost sight of this important insight we would have been spared the confusions occasioned by the hedonistic, moralistic, and utilitarian interpretations of the aesthetic experience which have abounded since his time.

He did not, it is true, emphasize as he should the positive aesthetic interest which beauty unquestionably arouses in the aesthetically sensitive beholder. It may be true that

"a man abandoned by himself on a desert island would adorn neither his hut nor his person; nor . . . seek for flowers, still less . . . grow plants, in order to adorn himself therewith," in short, that "the beautiful interests only in *society*."³⁸

The same might be urged with equal plausibility for every type of interest except the purely sensuous. But the fact remains that beauty exercises a compelling and positive fascination which Kant on the whole ignores in his negative characterization of taste as disinterested.

His descriptions of taste in the second and fourth sections of the *Analytic* are more positive. Here his analysis is at once discriminating and happily phrased. Taste is universal not in actuality but only by imputation, and the judgment of taste is not necessarily correct but merely postulates the possibility of correctness:

"The judgment of taste . . . does not *postulate* the agreement of every one . . . ; it only *imputes* this agreement to every one. . . . It may be uncertain whether or not the man, who believes that he is laying down a judgment of taste, is, as a matter of fact, judging in conformity with that Idea [of a universal voice]; but that he refers his judgment thereto, and, consequently, that it is intended to be a judgment of taste, he announces by the expression 'beauty.'"³⁹

³⁷ *Critique of Judgment*, p. 80.

³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 174.

³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 62.

The necessity of taste, in turn, is a function of its normative character:

"The judgment of taste requires the agreement of every one; and he who describes anything as beautiful claims that every one *ought* to give his approval to the object in question and also describe it as beautiful."⁴⁰

In a word, taste is clearly to be distinguished from mere private preference as expressed in the statement, "It pleases me." Its universality and necessity are not, however, conceptually motivated. On this point Kant, like Croce, is justifiably insistent, though, again like Croce, he seems to suggest that the absence of all explicit appeal to concepts implies the denial of all implicit conceptualization. His own explanation of taste in terms of the unusually harmonious play of the imagination and the understanding (the faculty of concepts), and his identification of beauty with aesthetically satisfying form, actually commit him to the view that taste does involve a type of cognition in which conceptual interpretation must assume an essential rôle.⁴¹ His description of aesthetic response would have been far more adequate if he had here developed the implications of his own earlier theories and pointed out that aesthetic intuition does, like sense-perception, involve an implicit use of both categorial and empirical concepts. But here, as elsewhere, Kant is primarily concerned with those characteristics of aesthetic intuition which make it unique and more specifically distinguish it from those types of cognition which can, or must, explicitly invoke conceptually articulated principles. Some theorists,⁴² no doubt, would claim that the moral judgment, like the aesthetic, involves no appeal to conceptual rules or maxims but, like it, is purely intuitive. It is hard to deny, however, that moral thought and conduct invite an appeal to conceptual principles in a way in which man's aesthetic taste does not. Conduct motivated by utility, and both scientific and philosophical inquiry, meanwhile, must surely be admitted to differ fundamentally in this respect from aesthetic response. The pure judgment of taste is

⁴⁰ *Critique of Judgment*, p. 92.

⁴¹ cf. Barrows Dunham, *Kant's Theory of Aesthetic Form*.

⁴² For example, Warner Fite, in his *Moral Philosophy* (New York, 1925).

indeed "contemplative"⁴³ rather than utilitarian, and "singular"⁴⁴ rather than general or universal.

When Kant says that beauty is the form of purposiveness as perceived without any representation of a purpose, his readers may well be tempted to accuse him of greater obscurity than is forgivable even in philosophy. Yet here again Kant's insight is valid, and anyone who attempts to re-express it more simply and clearly will presently feel himself more charitably disposed to the Kantian formulation. The indubitable facts to which Kant is here calling our attention are, first, that any object which merits the designation "beautiful" has an aesthetically "organic" character such that the parts are aesthetically related to the whole, each having its aesthetic function or purpose, and, second, that this formal organization can only be aesthetically intuited and never conceptually tested by an appeal to specific purposes or ideal standards, i.e. by the "representation" of a purpose. Consider, for example, a painting which is satisfying to a trained and sensitive critic. The more "perfect" it is as a thing of beauty, the greater the "rightness" of each of its constituent parts in its relation to the other parts and to the entire composition. This is, however, merely a "felt" rightness; neither the painter nor the critic can prove, by an appeal to rules, norms, or ideals, the excellences (or defects) which both believe the picture actually to possess. They can only "perceive" or aesthetically intuit its aesthetic quality, which is a function of its organic form. And though, in expressing a judgment of taste upon it, the critic or the painter must indeed appraise it according to some standard of pictorial excellence, this standard is derived from the intuitive study of other paintings, regarded not as "models" but as unique "examples" of artistic excellence or deficiency, and is again incapable of conceptual formulation. Appeal to such rules as the canon of Polycletus⁴⁵ can serve to define correctness but never true artistic merit. None the less, taste is, in its own way, perfectly precise and is not to be thought of as confused conceptual apprehension, whether moral or scientific.

⁴³ *Critique of Judgment*, pp. 53, 71, etc.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 158.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p. 89.

2. It is clear that in his account of the aesthetic judgment, Kant defines taste and beauty in terms of one another, taste as the intuitive apprehension of beauty, beauty as the object of taste. He also insists, on the one hand, that taste, unlike mere private preference, is "universal" and "necessary" *as though* it had objective validity, i.e. as though a judgment of taste could be true or false, adequate or inadequate; and, on the other hand, he explicitly relates beauty to the form of the objects which are aesthetically apprehended. It would appear, then, that he is completely committed to the view that beauty is an objective quality which actually resides in nature and in works of art. Yet Kant asserts repeatedly that beauty is not objective and that taste does not have cognitive significance:

"... Beauty is not a concept of the object and the judgment of taste is not cognitive." "The aesthetical judgment contributes nothing towards the knowledge of its objects. . . ." "... Beauty, without a reference to the feeling of the subject, is nothing by itself."⁴⁶

How is the adoption of this position to be explained? What Kant does is (a) to recognize that aesthetic response is evoked by the peculiar organization of certain phenomenal objects, i.e. he admits that the form of those objects which occasion in us a sense of beauty is itself an objective fact:

"A judgment of taste consists in calling a thing beautiful *just because of that characteristic in respect of which it accommodates itself to our mode of apprehension.*" "In the case of an object whose *form* . . . , in the mere reflection upon it (without reference to any concept to be obtained of it), is *judged as the ground of a pleasure in the representation of such an object*, this pleasure is judged as bound up with the representation necessarily . . . for every judging being in general. The *object* is then called beautiful; and the faculty of judging by means of such a pleasure . . . is called taste."⁴⁷

⁴⁶ *Critique of Judgment*, pp. 166, 37, 65.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 154, 31. cf. "The excitement of both faculties (imagination and understanding) to indeterminate, but yet, *through the stimulus of the given sensation*, harmonious activity . . . is the sensation whose universal communicability is postulated by the judgment of taste" (*ibid.*, p. 66). The italics in these passages are mine.

He then (b) denies true objectivity to this form *as aesthetic form* because its aesthetic quality can only be "felt" or aesthetically intuited and cannot be apprehended in terms of definitive concepts or proved by an appeal to conceptual principles:

"... A universality which does not rest on concepts of objects (not even on empirical ones) is not logical but aesthetical. . . . For this I use the expression *general validity* which signifies the validity of the reference of a representation not to the cognitive faculty, but to the feeling of pleasure and pain for every subject. . . . A judgment with *objective* [i.e. logical] *universal validity* is also always valid subjectively. . . . But from a *subjective universal validity*, i.e. aesthetical and resting on no concept, we cannot infer that which is logical . . . because it does not unite the predicate of beauty with the concept of the *object*. . . ."⁴⁸

He therefore concludes (c) that taste merely judges its object *as if* beauty were an objective quality, whereas actually all that can be said with philosophical accuracy is that the object in question is so organized as to arouse *in us* an aesthetic response. We

"will therefore speak of the beautiful, *as if* beauty were a characteristic of the object and the judgment logical (constituting a cognition of the object by means of concepts of it); although it is only aesthetical and involves merely a reference of the representation of the object to the subject."⁴⁹

It must be left to the reader to decide whether or not Kant's position is really satisfactory. What he is obviously attempting to do is to compromise between a radical aesthetic subjectivism, which would reduce taste to mere private preference, and a frankly objectivistic position which declares beauty to have its locus in the phenomenal object whose form occasions aesthetic pleasure.⁵⁰ In modern philosophical terminology, he describes beauty as neither subjective nor objective but as the emergent of a process, that is, as a function of a distinctive type of subjective response to a distinctive type of object. This position is defended today in many quarters. But it can also be argued, and, as I believe, with

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 60f.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p. 56 (italics mine). cf. *ibid.*, p. 159, etc.

greater cogency, that since aesthetic response is, as Kant admits, conditioned by the form of objects to which genuine objectivity must be assigned, the term "beauty" should be applied to the aesthetic character of this form and thus judged to be as objective as the form of which it is a function.

This interpretation seems to me to be superior for two reasons. In the first place, it alone really explains variations of taste without reducing taste to mere private preference. The judgments "It is beautiful" and "It pleases me" can be distinguished only if the former does claim cognitive validity, and this claim, in turn, involves the assumption that the object in question does or does not possess the quality of beauty. It is taste, not beauty, that is *both* subjectively and objectively conditioned; and taste can be so conditioned only if beauty is a genuinely objective quality. In the second place, this objectivistic interpretation is entirely in conformity with Kant's central thesis in the first *Critique* to the effect that subjectivity and objectivity are definable only in terms of one another as functions of a *cognitive process*. Now the type of cognition dealt with in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, namely, sense-perception, involves the use of categories and rules in terms of which the "object" can be conceptually defined, whereas such reference and definition are not possible in the case of aesthetic experience. The crucial question therefore is whether all cognition must be conceptual in this sense. Kant's deep-seated rationalism reveals itself in his consistent assumption that it must. It is at least possible, however, to challenge this rationalism and argue that, on the contrary, cognition may be of many types and that, at least in aesthetic apprehension (and perhaps also in other types of intuition, such as the religious or the moral), a genuinely objective quality can be genuinely cognized without appeal to explicit concepts or the application of rules and principles. This more inclusive interpretation of cognition, according to which concepts are not the only media of thought and communication, is indeed suggested by Kant's own doctrine of "aesthetical Ideas"—a doctrine which, though never adequately developed, is one of his most illuminating contributions to aesthetic theory. This doctrine must now be considered.

3. I have already discussed Kant's recognition of the reproductive faculty of the imagination in the creative acts of artistic

genius, and his distinction between truly inspired and merely correct art. In §49 he characterizes inspired art as possessing "spirit" and defines spirit, in an aesthetical sense, as "the animating principle of the mind."⁵⁰ He explains this principle as follows:

"Now I maintain that this principle is no other than the faculty of presenting *aesthetical Ideas*. And by an aesthetical Idea I understand that representation of the imagination which occasions much thought, without, however, any definite thought, i.e. any *concept*, being adequate to it; it consequently cannot be completely compassed and made intelligible by language."⁵¹

By "language" Kant means, as is presently apparent, a non-poetical or strictly conceptual use of language. He then proceeds to compare these aesthetical Ideas with the Ideas of pure reason (discussed in the first and second *Critiques*) which reason can articulate to itself with perfect clarity but which the imagination cannot reconstruct or find exemplified in the phenomenal, spatio-temporal world of our sense experience. (The chief of these rational Ideas, it will be recalled, are God, freedom, and immortality.)

"We easily see that [an aesthetical Idea] is the counterpart . . . of a rational Idea; which conversely is a concept to which no *intuition* (or representation of the imagination) can be adequate." "We might call the aesthetical Idea an *inexplicable* representation of the imagination, and a rational Idea an *indemonstrable* concept of reason. . . . *Concepts of the understanding* must, as such, always be demonstrable. . . . The concept of *magnitude* can be given *a priori* in the intuition of space, e.g. of a right line, etc.; the concept of *cause* in impenetrability, in the collision of bodies, etc. Consequently both can be authenticated by means of an empirical intuition, i.e. the thought of them can be proved (demonstrated, verified) by an example. . . . The rational concept of . . . transcendental freedom [in contrast] is, . . . in kind, an indemonstrable concept and a rational Idea. . . . As in a rational Idea the *imagination* with its intuitions does not attain to the given concept, so in an aesthetical Idea the *understanding* by

⁵⁰ *Critique of Judgment*, p. 197. cf. *ibid.*, p. 199, etc.

⁵¹ *ibid.*, p. 197.

its concepts never attains completely to that internal intuition which the imagination binds up with a given representation. Since, now, to reduce a representation of the imagination to concepts is the same thing as to *expound* it, the aesthetical Idea may be called an *inxponible* representation of the imagination (in its free play).⁶²

Kant then proceeds to describe, in a passage of unusual interest, the poetic use of metaphor, i.e. the fruitful interplay of concepts and images fused into an artistically organic whole, the effect of this interplay being to endow the concepts so employed with vitality, the images with more universal significance. In every successful metaphor, concept and image are thus mutually fructifying. Meanwhile the emphasis or point of reference varies; sometimes an image is used to give an important concept new overtones of meaning, and sometimes a concept is invoked to enrich a crucial image. Kant quotes some lines, presumably written by Frederick the Great,⁶³ to illustrate the first type of metaphor, and remarks that here

"the great King . . . quickens his rational Idea [Kant should have said, his "abstract concept"] of a cosmopolitan disposition at the end of life by an attribute [or image] which the imagination (in remembering all the pleasures of a beautiful summer day that are recalled at its close by a serene evening) associates with that representation [or concept], and which excites a number of sensations and secondary representations for which no expression is found. On the other hand, an intellectual concept may serve conversely as an attribute for a representation of sense and so can quicken this latter by means of the Idea of the supersensible. . . . Thus, for example, a certain poet says in his description of a beautiful morning:

⁶² *Critique of Judgment*, pp. 197f., 236f.

⁶³ *ibid.*, p. 200. The passage is quoted by Kant in German prose. Bernard prints, without confirming the reference, the following lines which Barni quotes as occurring in one of Frederick the Great's French poems:

"Oui, finissons sans trouble et mourons sans regrets,
En laissant l'univers comblé de nos bienfaits.
Ainsi l'astre du jour au bout de sa carrière,
Répand sur l'horizon une douce lumière;
Et les derniers rayons qu'il dardé dans les airs,
Sont les derniers soupirs qu'il donne à l'univers."

"The sun arose
As calm from virtue springs."⁶⁴

The metaphorical relation could hardly be expressed more clearly or succinctly than in the following summary:

"In a word the aesthetical Idea is a representation of the imagination associated with a given concept, which is bound up with such a multiplicity of partial representations in its free employment, that for it no expression marking a definite concept can be found; and such a representation, therefore, adds to a concept much ineffable thought, the feeling of which quickens the cognitive faculties, and with language, which is the mere letter, binds up spirit also."⁶⁵

The reader must study the entire passage (pp. 197-206) and Kant's analysis of the several arts (pp. 206-20) to arrive at a fair estimate of Kant's comprehension of the use of metaphor in poetry and, more generally, of the ways in which the several arts employ their respective media to express, with precision and power, what cannot be expressed in cold conceptual prose. Kant is by no means clear on the distinction between artistic symbolism and genuine artistic expression and he achieves no more than an inadequate notion of the expressive potentialities of the chief artistic media. He does succeed, however, in formulating with notable success the all-important truth that art can, in its own way, express ideas which do not permit of translation into the language of scientific or philosophical prose—in short, that a successful work of art is an effective non-conceptual vehicle for the expression and communication of ideas. But if this is indeed the case, aesthetic response to art must be truly cognitive in two ways; first, in the intuition and judgment of objective beauty, since the Ideas in question are aesthetical, and second, in the intuition and judgment of artistic content, that is, of what the artist succeeds in expressing in his art *via* beautiful or artistic form. Had Kant fully realized the epistemological implications of this doctrine of aesthetical Ideas, he could hardly have persisted in branding all aesthetic response as non-cognitive and all beauty as merely subjective to the beholder.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 200f.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p. 201.

4. The distinction which Kant insists upon between beauty and sublimity makes it even more imperative that he regard beauty as genuinely objective.

In his various discussions of beauty he sharply distinguishes natural from artistic beauty, without, however, losing sight of their common generic character. Art, he insists, must always be capable of being recognized for what it is, the product of human design; yet this design must never be obviously labored or painfully obtrusive:

“In a product of beautiful art we must become conscious that it is art and not nature; but yet the purposiveness of its form must seem to be as free from all constraint of arbitrary rules as if it were a product of mere nature. . . . A product of art appears like nature when, although its agreement with the rules, according to which alone the product can become what it ought to be, is *punctilio*nously observed, yet this is not *painfully* apparent; the form of the schools does not obtrude itself—it shows no trace of the rule having been before the eyes of the artist and having fettered his mental powers.”⁶⁶

Nature, in turn, is beautiful because it looks like art; but in judging it aesthetically Kant reminds us that all questions of conscious design are irrelevant; we must limit ourselves to the appreciation of it as wholly free and spontaneous.

This distinction enables Kant to assess the respective merits of natural and artificial beauty. Natural beauty is purer and freer than most artificial beauty; the representational arts, including literature, on the other hand, have the merit of being able to portray naturally ugly objects in a beautiful manner:

“A natural beauty is a *beautiful thing*; artificial beauty is a *beautiful representation* of a thing. . . . Beautiful art shows its superiority in this, that it describes as beautiful things which may be in nature ugly or displeasing.”⁶⁷

In these and many similar passages Kant preserves the distinction between natural and artificial beauty as species of generic

⁶⁶ *Critique of Judgment*, pp. 187f.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 193f. “There is only one kind of ugliness which cannot be represented . . . without destroying all aesthetic satisfaction and consequently artificial beauty, viz. that which excites *disgust*” (*ibid.*, p. 195).

beauty which, in turn, is the product of formal organization and the unique object of aesthetic satisfaction:

"Whether we are dealing with natural or with artificial beauty we can say generally: *That is beautiful which pleases in the mere act of judging it.*"⁵⁸

Sublimity, meanwhile, is sharply distinguished from beauty, and chiefly on the score of its subjectivity. We need not discuss Kant's general doctrine of the sublime as this is dealt with in a separate essay in the present volume.⁵⁹ What concerns us here is his insistence, in this context, that whereas beauty may legitimately be ascribed to an object arousing aesthetic satisfaction, natural and man-made objects which inspire a sense of sublimity cannot, with equal accuracy, be described as sublime:

"... We express ourselves incorrectly if we call any *object of nature* sublime, although we can quite correctly call many objects of nature beautiful. . . . All that we can say is that the object is fit for the presentation of a sublimity which can be found in the mind; for no sensible form can contain the sublime properly so-called. . . . Thus the wide ocean, disturbed by the storm, cannot be called sublime. Its aspect is horrible. . . . Who would call sublime, e.g. shapeless mountain masses piled in wild disorder upon each other with their pyramids of ice, or the gloomy raging sea? . . . True sublimity must be sought only in the mind of the [subject] judging, not in the natural object."⁶⁰

In his section on the sublime, it is with nature in its immensity and its might that Kant is consistently preoccupied, not with art as the expression of a sublime content; even the pyramids and St. Peter's, which are mentioned, are instanced only because of their size. If, then, nature can never properly be called sublime while natural objects may correctly be entitled beautiful, how is the conclusion to be avoided that beauty does possess some degree or type of objectivity?

There are, indeed, certain passages in which Kant seems to recognize the possibility that art, in contrast to nature, may be

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p. 187.

⁵⁹ R. W. Bretall, "Kant's Theory of the Sublime," below.

⁶⁰ *Critique of Judgment*, pp. 103, 117f. One sentence has been transcribed.

genuinely expressive of sublimity. The sense of the sublime, it will be recalled, is for him essentially a product of the moral consciousness. In his account of "adherent" beauty Kant admits the possibility of beauty being combined with moral ideas, and though he still insists that beauty *as such* gains nothing from such a combination, he does, in a later section, grant that art *as art* may acquire new significance in the process:

"As the combination of the pleasant (in sensation) with beauty, which properly is only concerned with form, is a hindrance to the purity of the judgment of taste; so also is its purity injured by the combination with beauty of the good. . . ." "[But] even the presentation of the sublime, so far as it belongs to beautiful art, may combine with beauty in a *tragedy in verse*, in a *didactic poem*, in an *oratorio*; and in these combinations beautiful art is yet more artistic."⁶¹

Here, as elsewhere, his phraseology and his examples make it clear that, despite his doctrine of aesthetical Ideas, Kant never really succeeded in conceiving of art as a unique vehicle for the expression of profoundly significant insights which cannot as adequately be expressed in conceptual prose; it is noteworthy that his examples of art that rises above merely aesthetic merit are all chosen from literature or from those mixed arts in which verbal language is employed. But if allowance be made for this serious deficiency, his final appraisal of pure artificial beauty devoid of all larger human significance, on the one hand, and of art possessed of such significance, on the other, is wholly in line with the great critical tradition which goes back to Aristotle and Longinus:

"If the beautiful arts are not brought into more or less close combination with moral Ideas, which alone bring with them a self-sufficing satisfaction, this . . . fate [of a dull spirit, an object gradually become distasteful, and a mind discontented with itself and peevish] must ultimately be theirs. They then serve only as a distraction."⁶²

5. A word must finally be added concerning Kant's several interpretations of the aesthetic phenomena which he has been at

⁶¹ *Critique of Judgment*, pp. 82, 214.

⁶² *ibid.*, p. 214.

pains to describe and analyze. The problem to which he here applies himself relates (a) to the creative processes whereby artificial beauty, on the one hand, and natural beauty, on the other, are brought into being, and (b) to man's re-creative responses to beauty of both types. How, he asks, are these processes and responses to be explained and what is the larger significance of both types of phenomena? Kant offers, in answer to these questions, three separate types of explanation which approach the phenomena from three different points of view, i.e. by reference to three distinguishable sets of explanatory principles.

The first of these explanations, involving an appeal to mechanical and physiological laws, is dealt with in two brief passages, the first, in the concluding *Remark in the Analytic*, and the second, in §58 of the *Dialectic*. In the former, Kant admits the possibility "that with all our thoughts is harmonically combined a movement in the organs of the body"⁶³ and he is, accordingly, quite willing to

"concede to Epicurus that all gratification, even that which is occasioned through concepts, excited by aesthetical Ideas, is *animal*, i.e. bodily sensation; without the least prejudice to the *spiritual* feeling of respect for moral Ideas, which is not gratification at all but an esteem for self (for humanity in us), that raises us above the need of gratification, and even without the slightest prejudice to the less noble [satisfaction] of taste."⁶⁴

Kant nowhere in the *Critique* develops this physiological explanation of aesthetic response and he does not explicitly consider the possibility of a similar type of explanation of man's artistic creativity. But since he believes that man, as a spatio-temporal phenomenon, is part and parcel of the phenomenal world and therefore subject to its laws, he would, it is clear, be quite prepared to recognize the possibility of "explaining" not only his re-creative but his creative activities in terms of physiological processes.

This explanation of man's aesthetic activities is paralleled by a strictly mechanistic interpretation of natural beauty—an interpretation which Kant considers with somewhat greater care. After describing the chemical processes which issue in inorganic con-

⁶³ *ibid.*, p. 225.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 226f.

figurations of rare beauty, as, for example, in ice, salt, and rock formation, he concludes that

"without detracting from the teleological principle by which we judge of organization, we may well think that the beauty of flowers, of the plumage of birds, or of shellfish, both in shape and color, may be ascribed to nature and its faculty of producing forms in an aesthetically purposive way . . . according to chemical laws by the arrangement of the material requisite for the organization in question."⁶⁵

In short, though Kant is not particularly interested in this type of explanation, he is yet willing to grant that both the production of beauty, whether natural or artificial, and man's aesthetic response to it, may be susceptible to strictly scientific explanation. But he is insistent that such explanation, however exhaustive at its own level, does not preclude or obviate the necessity for other types of explanation of a non-mechanistic sort.

Kant's second mode of interpretation is in part psychological, in part transcendental, in character, and it is this interpretation which he invokes most frequently and most confidently. It relates primarily to man's aesthetic response issuing in the judgment of taste, but it is also applicable by implication, though perhaps more precariously, to the process of artistic creation. What Kant does, it will be recalled, is to appeal to the faculties of imagination and understanding whose rôle in ordinary sense-perception has been so exhaustively analyzed in the first *Critique*. It is surely greatly to Kant's credit that, seeking to explain aesthetic response at this level, he did not invent a new faculty of aesthetic intuition. He follows the much wiser course of conceiving of aesthetic response as a heightening and an intensifying of normal sense-perception. Aesthetic satisfaction is produced, he believes, by the unusually harmonious play of the imagination and the understanding—a play which is occasioned, in turn, by a type of spatio-temporal organization unusually well adapted to our perceptual apprehension. This account of aesthetic response by no means precludes the possibility of recognizing its qualitative uniqueness; it provides an explanation, on the other hand, for the imputed universality and necessity of taste, for if all normal human beings are, by

⁶⁵ *Critique of Judgment*, p. 246.

definition, capable of normal sense-perception, they must possess (if Kant's analysis in the first *Critique* is correct) the faculties of imagination and understanding, and, so endowed, they must, at least ideally, be capable of genuine aesthetic response, however untutored and unsophisticated. Kant has thus with considerable success answered the question which is crucial to a transcendental inquiry: How are aesthetic response and taste, as described, possible? The comparable explanation of genius, in turn, involves an appeal to the productive (in contrast to the reproductive) imagination, and here again no new faculty is invoked; the fact is merely recognized that certain individuals possess, to a very unusual degree, a creative power which, none the less, ordinary mortals also exhibit, though only feebly and prosaically.

Kant's final explanation is genuinely metaphysical in character and relates to natural as well as man-made beauty and to man's aesthetic response to both types. No adequate discussion of this explanation is here possible, however, since it is so closely integrated with Kant's metaphysic. The first *Critique* concludes with the doctrine of spatio-temporal phenomena as the sum-total of all possible objects of sense experience and the explicit injunction that, although phenomena so defined may exhaust reality, there remains the possibility that reality as a whole may include another dimension of being. The second *Critique* transforms this theoretical possibility into a moral or practical certainty; man's moral experience, as an experience of worth, is capable of validation only by reference to a noumenal realm of value. In both *Critiques*, meanwhile, but particularly in the second, the question is repeatedly raised as to how these two realms are related, and the second *Critique* explores the conditions under which noumenal values can and do achieve phenomenal expression in moral volition. Kant's doctrine, in the third *Critique*, of the "supersensible substrate" constitutes a more extended answer to this question—an answer formulated in the light of additional evidence. In briefest summary, his doctrine, proposed with due caution and merely as a "regulative" principle, is that an objective realm of values, directly intuited by the moral consciousness, may be believed to operate in mysterious fashion, objectively, in the realm of nature in the production of natural beauty, and subjectively, in the labors of creative genius and in man's more universal aesthetic response to

both artificial and natural beauty. In this context, it is the beauty of nature with which Kant is most impressed. Whatever its mechanistic interpretation, natural beauty possesses, he firmly believes, larger metaphysical significance. Not only must we seek "a ground external to ourselves for the beautiful of nature";⁶⁶ "the beautiful is the symbol of the morally good."⁶⁷ The latter statement appears, at the end of the *Dialectic*, without qualification; but earlier passages make it clear that it is natural beauty which has for Kant special metaphysical significance:

"... Connoisseurs in taste not only often, but generally, are given up to idle, capricious, and mischievous passions. . . . But . . . to take an *immediate interest* in the beauty of nature (not merely to have taste in judging it) is always a mark of a good soul. . . ."⁶⁸

This is the case because, in the beauty of a "wildflower, a bird or an insect" nature gives clear indication of the presence in the universe of a "super-sensible substrate" whose character we can, indeed, not fathom but which we may legitimately conceive of as both teleological and moral. This substrate, then, which provides the best available metaphysical explanation for natural beauty, and to which appeal must also be made for an ultimate explanation of genius and taste as well as for man's moral sensitivity, may reasonably be believed to constitute the central normative core of a teleological universe whose spatio-temporal appearance we entitle the world of phenomenal events and objects.

We cannot here inquire into the plausibility of this bold speculation with which Kant concludes his philosophy of art. What must be urged, however, is the validity of his belief that these three types of explanation of aesthetic phenomena do, indeed, not conflict, since they are pitched at different levels, but rather that they complement one another, each making an essential contribution to the baffling questions of how and why beauty appears and is accepted by us as an object of aesthetic delight and spiritual satisfaction.

⁶⁶ *Critique of Judgment*, p. 104.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p. 250.

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 176f.

X V

KANT'S THEORY OF AESTHETIC FORM

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IN modern philosophy aesthetic theory has followed a path already marked out by metaphysics and epistemology. Although this proposition is notably true of the rationalists, it is no less true of the empiricists, whose resort to immediate aesthetic experience testifies to the authority and dominance of John Locke. After the same manner, Kant's theory of aesthetic form emerges from the rationalist tradition, with a special content derived from his own epistemological point of view. It seems well, therefore, to begin by discussing the historical background of his theory and the philosophical motives which prompted it.

I

"I term that clear," wrote Descartes, "which is present and apparent to an attentive mind. . . . But the distinct is that which is so precise and different from all other objects that it contains within itself nothing but what is clear."¹ This is, of course, the fundamental Cartesian view of truth, but more important for aesthetics is the corollary which follows: "It is shown from the example of pain that a perception may be clear without being distinct."² Now pain, while not listed among the "six primitive passions,"³ is really a passion yet more primitive. It is equally with them a "perturbation of the soul," and it is present in at least two of the primitive passions, hatred and sadness. To admit that a passion may be clear is to admit that a passion may share one of the attributes of reason; the dualism between reason and feeling breaks down.

The collapse of this dualism in Descartes parallels perfectly the collapse of his rigid mind-body dualism. For the metaphysical dualism of the *Meditations* resolved itself into the interactionism of the *Passions of the Soul*, and the epistemological dualism was

¹ Descartes, *The Principles of Philosophy*, First Part, Principle XLV, *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, tr. by Haldane and Ross (Cambridge, 1911), Vol. I, p. 237.

² *ibid.*, First Part, Principle XLVI. *Works*, Vol. I, p. 237.

³ Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, Part First, Article LXIX. *Works*, Vol. I, p. 362.

in its turn resolved, in the *Principles of Philosophy*, by the admission of a world of sensuous and partial truth, clear but confused. This admission it was which provided rationalists with their first aesthetics.

It must be confessed, however, that Descartes gave aesthetics an opportunity rather than a direct stimulus. One cannot lay down a work of Descartes without recognizing how completely the concepts of mechanics dominated his thought. His universe, so far as he sees it consistently, has a form geometrically clear, a motion mechanically perfect. It has everything but life. It was thus not until Leibniz that rationalism could study aesthetics as the experience of living beings.

Leibniz' great contribution to philosophy was his attempt to show how the universe might be completely rational and at the same time alive. We are not here concerned with the success or failure of this attempt; it suffices for our purpose to indicate that in the doctrines of appetition and of "petites perceptions," we have a clear recognition that the non-rational phases of experience are at least as fundamental as the rational. The collapse of Descartes' epistemological dualism issues here into a positive acceptance of the world of sensibility,⁴ and with this acceptance the sphere of aesthetics begins to be marked out.

It was on the basis of the doctrines just now mentioned that Leibniz drew his distinction between the clear idea and the distinct. Clear ideas are those that suffice for a recognition of the object;⁵ suffice, that is to say, for the needs of daily life, which requires merely that individual objects be differentiated with certainty.⁶ Distinct ideas, on the other hand, are those which, as Cassirer puts it, "do not apprehend things *a posteriori* according to the forms of their appearance, but conceive them *a priori* according to their rational grounds."⁷ It is perfectly plain that in Leibniz' view aesthetic experience differs from logical or scientific thought, that the contemplation of a beautiful object deals not at

⁴ I use "sensibility" throughout this essay as equivalent to the German *Sinnlichkeit*. It is lamentable that no better can be found, but "sensuousness" and "sensuality" have hopelessly prejudiced connotations.

⁵ From the *Meditations on Knowledge, Truth, and Ideas*. Quoted in Carritt's anthology, *Philosophies of Beauty* (New York, 1931), p. 57.

⁶ cf. Cassirer, *Die Philosophie der Aufklärung* (Tübingen, 1932), p. 458.

⁷ *ibid.*, p. 459.

all with questions of ground and consequent, but solely with the sensuous apprehension of its form. The notion, therefore, of a clear (sensuous) perception which is, however, not distinct (intellectual) fits admirably the needs of an aesthetics.

After Descartes had admitted the possibility of a clear but confused perception, and after Leibniz had asserted such perception to be a natural phase of human experience rather than an unhappy obscuring of "thinking essence," there came inevitably a further step. The world of sensibility is now to be validated as a world, not of error, but of truth—of truth incomplete and inferior to the completely rational, but nonetheless of truth. "Imperium in facultates inferiores poscitur, non tyrannis,"⁸ wrote Baumgarten. Reason is to be master over the inferior faculties, but not a tyrant. The belief that he had discovered a new sphere of valid, if inferior, knowledge led Baumgarten to use for the first time the name "Aesthetics," and to describe that study as "the science of sensuous knowledge."⁹ Beauty is to be understood as the perfection of sensuous knowledge, ugliness as the defect of it.¹⁰ At the same time, by admitting the passions among the "confused or sensuous ideas,"¹¹ he was able to broaden the subjective basis of aesthetics beyond the psychological act of contemplation and to include also the impact of beautiful objects upon the observer's emotional life. Beyond the temperate limits which Baumgarten set for aesthetic theory lie only the sentimentality of neo-classicism in decay, the extravagances of romanticism in flower.

A review of rationalist aesthetics before Kant leads to the conclusion that any aesthetic theory having roots in such a tradition must be heavily inclined toward emphasis upon form. In the eyes of the whole rationalist school the world of sensibility needs redemption; the individual members of the school differ only in the degree to which they believe such redemption possible. Clarity is the redeemer, and clarity is clarity of form. When immediate perception is clear, the object stands before us as a perfectly distinguished individual. It is not as yet understood scientifically in

⁸ *Aesthetica*, no. 12. Quoted by Cassirer, *op. cit.*, p. 464.

⁹ Carritt, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

¹⁰ *Aesthetica*, no. 14; Carritt, *loc. cit.*; Cassirer, *op. cit.*, pp. 468-9.

¹¹ Baumgarten, *Meditationes Philosophicae*, nos. 25 and 29; Carritt, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-3.

terms of cause and effect, but there can at any rate be no confusion of the given object with other objects. What prevents the confusion is the object's pattern, figure, shape—in a word, its form. This is what is enjoyed in aesthetic experience, and no rationalist would think of construing aesthetic enjoyment as mere sense pleasure or as agreeable emotional activity.

Finally, behind the whole point of view there lurks the belief that form, as the one rational element in sense experience, is the only element worthy to be aesthetically enjoyed. By such an interpretation, aesthetics can be made to show a reflection of that high dignity which, in a rationalist's eyes, is possessed by knowledge alone. Despite the powerful influence of English empiricism, we shall find these fundamental convictions manifesting themselves in Kant and governing his thought.

II

I wish now to discuss the personal tastes and the philosophical motives which inclined Kant toward an extreme formalism in aesthetics. As regards the first of these, perhaps Kant's most significant remark is to be found in his *Hand-exemplar*: "Our age is the century of beautiful trifles, bagatelles, or sublime chimeras. The ancients were nearer nature; we have between ourselves and nature much luxury. . . . We do best if we let ourselves be guided by the examples of the ancients in sculpture and architecture, poetry and rhetoric. . . ."¹² This reaction against contemporary taste, coupled with an appeal to the culture of Greece, exactly expresses Kant's personal views: he is a conservative in the midst of accelerating change, the last great figure of the Enlightenment facing the rise of Romanticism.

His conservatism in aesthetics takes two forms: he opposes the somewhat decadent products of late neoclassic art, and he likewise opposes the new cult of sentimentality. When he speaks of *schönen Kleinigkeiten*, he is thinking of rococo; and when he speaks of *erhabenen Chimären*, he is thinking of the revival of mystery and sentiment, of all that Horace Walpole would have meant by the

¹² Quoted by Vorländer, *Immanuel Kant, der Mann und das Werk* (Leipzig, 1924), Vol. I, p. 385.

term "Gothic."¹³ When in the third *Critique* he calls that taste barbaric which needs for its satisfaction a mixture of charms and emotions, it is surely these two contemporary trends that he has in mind.

Now Kant was undoubtedly tempted to attack both trends on moral grounds alone, but his careful and (as I think) true separation of ethics and aesthetics obliged him to account for his dis-taste in purely aesthetic terms. His justification was found in the opposition of form to sense qualities on the one hand, and to emotion on the other. It is true that with so honest a philosopher as Kant the justification of personal tastes would hardly inspire the adoption of a whole philosophical point of view. When, however, his personal tastes conspire with other reasons to the same end, they must be deemed worthy their own place in an historical account.

I think it is not irrelevant to remark here that, so far as rococo is concerned, Kant erred in supposing its defects to lie in an over-emphasis upon sense qualities. Rococo is primarily a kind of form; it is form relaxed, no doubt, and wandering, but still form. If an attack must be made upon rococo, the attack should be based upon the charge that the form is so elaborate as to destroy unity and leave merely an impression of vagueness. But we may doubt the validity of even this principle: as the eighteenth century itself discovered, precision in art has its limitations.

The philosophical motives which prompted Kant's formalism were two: first, his own use of the *a priori* method, and second, his desire to integrate his whole metaphysical system. I shall discuss each in its turn.

Kant's early training in rationalism and the impact of Hume's philosophy upon his thought made him forever sure that experience can never guarantee the validity of any judgment. Every empirical induction must remain incomplete, for no generalizations of past events can yield certain truth about the future. Yet Kant never retired into a rationalist's tower, to dwell with the eternal but empty truths of mathematics or to spin out of a single

¹³ On behalf of a balanced account of Kant's views, it should be added that in other respects he reveals many eccentricities of eighteenth century taste. In what modern book on aesthetics, for example, would one expect to find fireworks and pepper-gardens cited as examples of the beautiful?

concept the fabric of a world. "That all our knowledge begins with experience there can be no doubt," he writes in the *Introduction* to the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.¹⁴ In Kant's view experience furnishes the occasion and the content for knowledge, but does not guarantee its validity.

This general point of view accounts for Kant's approach to epistemology in the first *Critique*, to ethics in the second, and to aesthetics in the third. An ethics, for example, which is entirely empirical (i.e. a system of rules devised from practice) can yield only an hypothetical imperative. An aesthetics which is entirely empirical (i.e. concerned with the effects of stimuli upon the sense organs) is also faulty and for the same reason. A moral agent, acting upon the hypothetical imperative, is limited by the privacy of the ends he pursues;¹⁵ the experiencer of beauty, attending solely to the pleasantness of his own sensations, is concerned with something no one else can possibly share, something genuinely unique.¹⁶

In aesthetics Kant's line of escape from the egocentric predicament lies in his referring the aesthetic judgment to the grounds of cognition in general. The wholly empirical elements in experience—the sensuous material, the feelings and emotions, all that Kant understands by the word *Sinnlichkeit*—leave us in solipsism. One thing only can be asserted to be universally valid, universally communicable, and that is knowledge. In Kant's view a purely private knowledge would be a contradiction in terms. This being granted, it follows that the grounds of cognition must be the same in all men, for otherwise knowledge would be incomunicable.¹⁷ In these grounds we find our escape from the privacy of sensation, and the judgments based on them can be extended to all experiencing persons.

What are the subjective conditions which make cognition possible? They are in part logical, where they concern the application of the categories to the sensuous manifold; but these conditions

¹⁴ *Werke*, Vol. III, p. 34. Reference to Kant's writings throughout this essay are to Cassirer's edition (Berlin, 1922-1923).

¹⁵ *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, *Werke*, Vol. V, p. 24.

¹⁶ "We cannot assume that the quality of sensations is the same in all subjects" (*Kritik der Urteilskraft*, *Werke*, Vol. V, p. 294; Bernard's translation [London, 1931], p. 74). See also the *Prolegomena*, *Werke*, Vol. IV, p. 48.

¹⁷ *Kr. d. Ur.*, *Werke*, Vol. V, p. 364; Bernard, p. 166n.

yield scientific judgments of sense perception, not judgments of taste. In aesthetic experience the object is regarded as altogether individual,¹⁸ and all notions of use, purpose, or morality are laid aside.¹⁹ The aesthetic judgment is "conceptless."²⁰

We resort, then, to the psychological conditions of cognition, and here we find two faculties employed. There is the Imagination, the function of which is to synthesize sense data in spatio-temporal form; and there is the Understanding, which completes cognition by determining the sense data according to the categories.²¹ Without the presence and the harmony of both these faculties cognition would be impossible. Therefore, this condition may be imputed to everyone as necessary for the possibility of knowledge.

When the harmony of Imagination and Understanding is enjoyed in and for itself, apart from any concept, we have the genuinely aesthetic pleasure. But the faculties cannot operate wholly in a vacuum. Since the Understanding is cut off from applying its categories, the content of the experience must be given by the Imagination; and this content must be a spatio-temporal pattern.²²

It is fair to remark at this point that the rigorous exclusion of concepts from aesthetic experience, while unquestionably true to Kant's intention in his doctrine of conceptlessness, is hardly possible even on his own description of beauty. If the Understanding is to be brought into activity at all, this must be done by the employment of concepts, since there is simply no other way in which the Understanding can act. Moreover, although concepts of ethics, teleology, and causality may with reason be excluded from aesthetic experience, there remains one concept without which, on the Kantian epistemology, the aesthetic object could not even be perceived—namely, the category of substance. The individuality

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 284; Bernard, p. 61.

¹⁹ *ibid.*, no. 15 entire.

²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 289; Bernard, p. 67; and *passim* throughout the text.

²¹ *ibid.*, p. 360; Bernard, p. 161: . . . "imagination (for the intuition and comprehension of the manifold) and Understanding (for the concept as a representation of the unity of this comprehension)."

²² Kant consistently uses the word *Vorstellung* to indicate the aesthetic object. The *Vorstellung* is that stage in the cognitive process in which the sensuous manifold has been determined in space and time, but not yet according to the categories.

which Kant rightly attributes to the aesthetic object is possible only through the use of this category in integrating the sensuous manifold.²³

At all events, our analysis has shown, I hope, how Kant's application of his *a priori* method led to the conclusion that the beauty of objects must lie in their spatio-temporal form. We may now conclude this historical review with a brief examination of the second of Kant's philosophical motives—his desire to integrate his whole metaphysical system.

The *Critique of Pure Reason* validated scientific judgments, but condemned the theoretical use of reason to sceptical uncertainty. One might say that Kant made the world safe for scientists but unsafe for philosophers. The *Critique of Practical Reason* used the concept of a "supersensible world" lying beyond sense experience as a means of demonstrating man's freedom from scientific law. Yet here arises a difficulty: while the world of sense can never influence the world of freedom across the "immeasurable gulf" that separates them, the world of freedom, says Kant, is "meant" to influence the world of sense.²⁴ This difficulty can be removed only by postulating an ultimate world unity, to be understood in teleological terms, which will systematize the multitude of empirical laws and at the same time provide a metaphysical basis for ethics.²⁵

Thus at the close of his philosophic labors Kant is moved to confess that mechanical causality cannot explain everything. We cannot, says Kant, know nature in its totality; but, if we conjecture what that totality might be, we shall have to regard every natural object as purposively adapted to the whole. Each hint of purposive unity in the world delights us as rendering it more intelligible, and among such hints none is more compelling than the effortless harmonizing of the representation with the cognitive powers in aesthetic experience.

²³ See the famous "slightly paradoxical" remark: "Only the permanent changes . . ." *Kr. d. rein. Vern.*, B230-1.

²⁴ *Kr. d. Ur.*, *Intro.* II; *Werke*, Vol. V, p. 244; Bernard, p. 13.

²⁵ ". . . empirical laws . . . must be considered in accordance with such a unity as they would have if an Understanding (although not our Understanding) had furnished them to our cognitive faculties, so as to make possible a system of experience according to particular laws" (*ibid.*, p. 249; Bernard, p. 19).

This theory, which is the doctrine of "subjective purposiveness," must be understood in terms of the *Refutation of Idealism* in the first *Critique*. Kant takes a realistic view of the object. For, if the object were merely a creation of the mind, there could be nothing remarkable in the mind's harmonizing with it. But aesthetic delight has clearly an element of surprise, as of the mind suddenly attuned to an object *given to* it. And only the form of that object—not its sensuous material—can make of it such a *Vorstellung* as will excite the Imagination to harmonious activity with the Understanding. Thus the metaphysics of beauty, no less than its logic, points to form as the one respect in which an object may be judged beautiful.

III

We now consider Kant's theory of aesthetic form in greater detail. It rests upon the fundamental opposition of spatio-temporal form to sense qualities and to emotions. There is also an opposition of form to thought content implied in the doctrine of conceptlessness, but this doctrine declined in importance after it had served the purpose of distinguishing between aesthetic judgments and the moral or teleological. Moreover, the doctrine ran counter to Kant's marked taste for didactic poetry as revealed, for example, in his admiration of Pope's *Essay on Man*.

Kant obviously regards the reception of sense data and the perception of form as two different stages in the cognition of an object. He was able to do so because he persistently thought of the spatio-temporal form as somehow imposed by the mind upon an amorphous material, the sensuous manifold. To grasp this distinction (and the effort may seem to some an awkward exercise of analysis), we have to separate the sense qualities of objects from their form. Painters have somewhat the same distinction when they talk about "drawing" as differentiated from "coloring," but they are quite innocent of epistemological assumptions.

When he discusses the "charms" of objects (that is to say, their sense qualities), Kant confines himself to sight and sound: "A mere color, e.g. the green of a grass plot, a mere tone . . . like that of a violin. . . ."²⁶ But the list can of course be extended to include all data of the other senses: there would be the sensations

²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 293; Bernard, p. 73.

of texture (not shape, which would be form) given by touch, the qualities of smell, the qualities of taste. While these three senses are not very rich sources of aesthetic enjoyment, they do supply many of the memory images used in poetry, and as such they deserve notice. All these sensations, Kant says, give only a physiological pleasure, which is to be sharply distinguished from aesthetic delight. It would be an accurate modernization of Kant's view to say that sensations as such are pre-aesthetic.

The lengths to which Kant went in isolating sense pleasure from beauty are indicated by his curious attempt to show how a single color or a single tone might by reinterpretation be considered as form. Adopting Euler's view that "colors are isochronous vibrations (*pulsus*) of the ether, as sounds are of the air in a state of disturbance,"²⁷ we might attend to the regularity with which stimuli impinge upon us and hence gain an awareness of form within the single sense quality. This is, of course, not psychologically possible. If, however, it were possible, then single sensations could be enjoyed as form, and the opposition between form and sensation would collapse.

Kant is no less clear in his explanation of form than in his explanation of charm. "Every form of the objects of sense . . . is either *figure* or *play*" (*Gestalt oder Spiel*).²⁸ The term *Gestalt*, which has a rather wider connotation than "figure," covers that class of objects whose form is entirely given at the moment of perception. "Play" refers to those objects, like a poem or a symphony, whose form is extended in time and whose unity can be apprehended only by the aid of memory. Thus in works of art we may prescribe a rule for the two classes just mentioned: "the *delineation* [Zeichnung] in the first case and the composition in the second constitute the proper object of the pure judgment of taste."²⁹ Broadening the term to a metaphorical as well as a literal use, we may affirm that in all art "*ist die Zeichnung das Wesentliche*."³⁰

We have now to observe Kant's constant fairness to those aspects of experience which his argument obliges him to invalidate. Sense qualities, he thinks, cannot be a basis of the beautiful, but

²⁷ *Kr. d. Ur.*, *Werke*, Vol. V, p. 294; Bernard, p. 74.

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 295; Bernard, p. 75.

²⁹ *ibid.*, *loc. cit.*; Bernard, p. 76.

³⁰ *ibid.*, *loc. cit.*; Bernard, p. 75.

they are not put down as hopeless outcasts. They are admitted "by indulgence as aliens,"³¹ as heightening the whole aesthetic effect. This they do by attracting our attention to the object and rendering its form more intuitible. In addition sense qualities may serve the purpose of symbols: "the white color of lilies seems to determine the mind to Ideas of innocence. . . . The song of birds proclaims gladness and contentment with existence."³² From these concessions to sensation arguments can be drawn which will seriously damage Kant's whole position.

It remains to say a word about the place of emotion in Kant's aesthetics. In general, emotion stands to the subjective apprehension of form as sense qualities do to its objective character. The aesthetic judgment, however, is contemplative; it regards only the form of the object. To such an experience emotion and charm must be alike irrelevant.

So the argument runs; but, where emotion is concerned, Kant's view is strongly reinforced by his own personal bias. If Kant thought sense pleasures ignoble, he regarded enjoyment of the emotions as positively dangerous. Emotion in the experience of the sublime is relatively safe, because it is grounded in morality; in the mind's awareness of the "sublimity of its destination";³³ but emotion such as may be aroused by beauty tends to vitiate the experience by degenerating into sentimentality. From his various anthropology lectures we know that Kant had definite writers in mind: Gellert, Klopstock, and especially Samuel Richardson.³⁴ With these examples before him, Kant is tireless in attack upon what he calls the "languid" emotions—romantic love and melancholy, certain forms of sentimental religion.³⁵ Yet there is the usual Kantian concession: the "strenuous" emotions suggest our power to overcome every obstacle, and hence, being worthy to be felt, do not corrupt beauty.

It is now possible to take a full view of the Kantian theory of aesthetic form. Arrived at by whatever logical, metaphysical, or personal motives, it lies in the complete exclusion of the world of

³¹ *ibid.*, *loc. cit.*; Bernard, p. 75.

³² *ibid.*, p. 376; Bernard, p. 181.

³³ *ibid.*, p. 334; Bernard, p. 126.

³⁴ See Otto Schlapp's *Kants Lehre vom Genie* (Göttingen, 1901) for a careful compilation of these views.

³⁵ *Werke*, Vol. V, p. 345; Bernard, p. 141.

sensibility from the basis of the aesthetic judgment. Form is pattern, figure, shape, structure, whether the object is given immediately or in temporal sequence. Sensation and emotion are no doubt present, but have nothing to do with beauty. For beauty dwells solely in the threefold harmony which blends the Imagination, the Understanding, and the representation in the enjoyment of form.

IV

Truth, for once, lies with the barbarians. The whole neo-classical period confused form in general with form conventionalized; it considered, for example, that if a drama had not the three unities, it had no aesthetic form at all. When, therefore, a long tradition began to produce tedium, artists first turned to the relaxations of rococo and to dallings with the medieval muse. But the artificiality of dying conventions carried over into the artificiality of these first experiments with emotion. It remained for the abler romantics to rediscover genuine feeling and to fulfil Baumgarten's dream of justifying the world of sensibility. Since, however, they did this in practice rather than in theory, we have still before us the task of showing on philosophical grounds the errors in Kant's theory of aesthetic form.

The criticism which I shall here suggest is based upon three propositions: first, that there is nothing in the Kantian psychology or epistemology to preserve the enjoyment of form from the faults alleged against sense pleasures; second, that the whole distinction between "form" and "charm" is a high abstraction; and third, that sense qualities can be shown to be necessary to aesthetic experience as constituting one source of beauty.

I. Kant's attack upon sensation was that it is private and incommunicable, that therefore we cannot demand of other men assent to an aesthetic judgment based upon sensations which in the nature of the case they do not feel. "To one violet color is soft and lovely, to another it is faded and dead. One man likes the tone of wind instruments, another that of strings."³⁶ The data of anthropology have made this notion a commonplace. To Occidental ears, for example, the tonal qualities of Oriental music are almost

* *Kr. d. Ur., Werke*, Vol. V, p. 281; Bernard, p. 57.

intolerable. The facts are beyond dispute, but there remains the question of what the facts prove.

I think it is fair to say that when Kant speaks of the "privacy of sensation," it is never quite clear whether he means that sensations differ totally with different persons, or that the *enjoyment* of them differs totally, or both. In the passage just quoted some identity of sense content is apparently presupposed. Both men have sensations of violet; what they differ in is their enjoyment of it. This interpretation would seem to be the most consistently Kantian, for he writes that "it is absolutely not to be required that every man should take pleasure in the same objects."³⁷

If this be the correct interpretation, the question arises whether the identity of sense content, which is here admitted, will not provide as valid a basis for aesthetic judgments as is provided by the harmony of the cognitive faculties. Kant is unquestionably certain that it will not do so and seems to regard this proposition as a fact needing no proof. The reason, if a reason were to be given, would be, I suppose, that the feeling-tones aroused by sensations differ unavoidably, being conditioned by separate nervous systems, separate structures of habit.

Such a view would undoubtedly explain the alleged fact, but it is also true that the same condition would hold of the perception of form. Granting the separateness of selves as well as of nervous systems, on what grounds do we assume that pleasure inevitably follows the harmony of Imagination and Understanding with each other and with the representation? Kant argues from a necessary logical activity of the cognitive faculties to a psychological result, pleasure. What can prevent the caprices of individuality from tampering with the pleasure, even though they cannot tamper with the harmony? The fact is that any attempt to deduce pleasure from the harmony of the cognitive faculties must be open to the same objections as those which perplex sense pleasure. Both proofs must be empirical, and neither can be *a priori* in the Kantian sense.

In general, I think we may say that it is very easy to overestimate differences of personal experience. There is privacy, to be sure, but there is also community. A critic who prefers Cézanne to Raphael has surely cognized their paintings no less than a critic

³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 365; Bernard, pp. 167-8.

who prefers Raphael to Cézanne. Even the affective phases of experience are less capricious than may be supposed: hardly anyone will find the sensation of burning pleasant; hardly anyone will find painful the discharge of functional organic activity. Spinoza was able with astonishing success to build a psychology upon precisely this principle. The conclusion would seem to be that although we are condemned (as Kant would say) to empirical proof in the validation of both sensation and form as bases of the aesthetic judgment, there is more hope in the empirical method than Kant ever supposed.

2. Kant's argument against admitting sense qualities to a place in the experience of beauty has great cogency so long as the reader is willing to grant his assumption of the "singleness of sensations." No one would maintain that any *single* sense quality is by itself beautiful. We have already observed that single sensations are pre-aesthetic, and on such a level it is simply impossible that any question of beauty should arise.

The difficulty is that the problem as thus stated is purely academic. In actual experience there are no single sensations. Every moment of experience exhibits a diversity of sensations which are organized not only in space and time, but also according to what we may call *emphasis*. Certain of the sense qualities dominate the others, but this dominance is possible only through the presence of the others and through the fact of organization. We may, for example, think we are enjoying a single red color, but we are actually enjoying that red as set off against other colors and indeed against other sense qualities. The pre-aesthetic level of single sensations is therefore a high abstraction, obtained by analyzing the empirical fact and hypostatizing the results.

Not content, however, with beginning with an abstraction, Kant proceeds to argue that what is true of sense qualities on the pre-aesthetic level will be true of them on every other level. The transition is wholly illegitimate. A solitary sense quality is not *per se* beautiful, we may agree; the fault, however, is not that it is a sense quality, but that it is solitary. When, on the actual empirical level, it joins with other sense qualities to form an organized aesthetic experience, the situation is entirely different. Violet, as a single color, may be liked or disliked as you please, even though no experience will yield you a sensation of violet alone. In a painting,

however, where the violet serves a definite artistic purpose, it cannot avoid being a necessary part of the total effect. The solitary notes of a trombone may be pleasant perhaps only to the player,³⁸ but in the performance of a symphony they may be so necessary that the music would be crippled by loss of them.

The conclusion of this argument is assured when we really try to conceive an object as mere form entirely devoid of sensuous material. Harmony and counterpoint are forms of music, but what are harmony and counterpoint except specific relationship among tones? Think away the tones, and the formal structure collapses; it cannot even exist.

Or consider the plastic arts. What is "delineation" but the juxtaposition of color areas? Even in an etching we cannot imagine that the black lines upon a white ground yield us "pure" form free of sense qualities, for the form is nothing but one group of color areas (black) in a special relation to another group of color areas (white).³⁹ This holds true *a fortiori* of painting, and no less so of sculpture. The concepts of sculpture, such as mass and modelling, are reducible mainly to the question of how a surface reflects light, and also perhaps to the tactful qualities which may be sensed directly or suggested. The apparent preeminence of form in the plastic arts is deceptive; we forget that lines and surfaces are really color, and we suppose with Kant that sensation is irrelevant.

The experiment, then, of thinking away the sense qualities of objects results in the disappearance with them of every bit of experienceable form. The distinction between form and sense qualities stands revealed for the abstraction it is. The argument, however, has one gap that must be closed: although the distinction between form and sense qualities is metaphysically impossible, it might be aesthetically possible. That is to say, the sense qualities might be necessary to the form of an object, but not neces-

³⁸ It may be worth observing that what makes the solitary notes of a trombone unpleasant is not their tonal quality, but the lack of a proper *milieu* of harmoniously contrasting sounds.

³⁹ I use the term "color" in the Kantian but untechnical sense of "the quality in virtue of which objects present different appearances to the eye, in respect of the kind of light reflected from their surfaces" (*Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*). Painters, I am informed, regard black and white as "neutrals," and distinguish them from "colors." This distinction is irrelevant for our purposes, since Kant uses "color" as coextensive in meaning with "visual sense qualities."

sary to its beauty. What we have to show is that the sense qualities are *aesthetically* necessary.

3. This conclusion will be reached, if we can establish the fact that a change in the sense qualities of a work of art impairs or improves the aesthetic experience of it. Let us imagine a Schubert song sung in a quavering or rasping soprano; let us imagine the performance of a symphony in which the violin parts are played by the horns and the horn parts by the violins. We must surely conclude that the finest music in the world will not survive ill-treatment of its tonal qualities.

And the place of color in painting? Compare an uncolored photograph of a masterpiece with the original: the "delineation" is the same, but at that point all resemblance ceases. M. Amédée Ozenfant, a painter and an extremely able critic, has maintained that color is "integral to the form itself." "It was believed," he writes, "that Picasso had invented a new system of painting: drawing instinct with its own life, plus color independent of it, yet melodiously accompanying it. It is sad to relate that all great painters proceeded similarly when they were on the wrong path. An example is Ingres' 'Joan of Arc,' which is in a blue both false and shrill: the drawing of this picture is most eloquent, but its color is mere 'coloring.'"⁴⁰

That a change in its sense qualities can heighten or impair the beauty of a work of art is a fact supported by many examples. It is, moreover, a fact which makes forever impossible the separation of form from sense qualities in the basis of the aesthetic judgment. Metaphysically considered, form must be defined as a relation among sense qualities; aesthetically considered, form will be that relation regarded as a source of delight. Kant's theory amounts to a restricting of aesthetic experience to the enjoyment of a disembodied ghost. For form, deprived of its content, can neither exist nor be enjoyed.

The liberalization of the objective basis of aesthetic experience may be paralleled by a liberalization of its subjective grounds. The view that beauty is essentially a matter of contemplation is far from explaining the rich and varied expanse of beauty in nature and in art. This general Kantian view has been revived in recent

⁴⁰ *Foundations of Modern Art* (New York, 1931), p. 254.

aesthetics with a curious twist. The moderns, so far from separating form from sense qualities, have bent their powers to a recovery of brightness in color and tone; but they have set in its place the separation of form from content which Kant abandoned. Yet even critics who, like Mr. Clive Bell, earnestly espouse the cause of form insist that the form must be significant; and that ambiguous word appears to mean the value of a given form for an observer's emotional life. Kant admits as much in his doctrine of the sublime, so that from this point of view it is surprising to find beauty suddenly become a Puritan. On examination, no good reason can be found for isolating from aesthetic experience any of the structural elements of conscious life.

The great vice which has steadily beset aesthetic theory is the arbitrary limitation of its range by the needs of some special point of view. Happily for art, the great artists have set up their own critical theories merely as explanations of what they were trying to do rather than as inviolable rules for themselves and others. And happily for aesthetic theory, Kant's doctrine of form represents only one phase—and that the narrowest—of his whole thinking upon the subject. If the *Critique of Judgment* could be rewritten and the inconsistencies removed, there would remain the broadest and profoundest study of aesthetics the world has yet known.

XVI

KANT'S THEORY OF THE SUBLIME

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KANT'S THEORY OF THE SUBLIME

"Nicht Gegensätze sind das Erhabene und Schöne, sondern Stämme und Äste *eines* Baumes; sein Gipfel ist das erhabenste Schöne."

—Herder.

THE Kantian account of sublimity is oriented in two directions—historically to the general background of eighteenth century aesthetics, and systematically to the background of Kant's philosophy, its peculiar emphasis, method, and presuppositions. By seeing how these two orientations were combined, and how in combination they modified each other, we shall understand more fully what Kant has to tell us about the sublime, and shall evaluate it more justly.

I

Kant's relation to the aesthetic doctrines of his age may not have been highly self-conscious; but it was a real and significant relation.¹ It is also what brings out the persistently empirical character of his thought. At every turn Kant was concerned to make sense of actual experience—to render it coherent certainly, but to render *it* coherent, and not merely some product of conceptualization. If the forms and instruments which he uses to effect this end appear sometimes arbitrary or accidental, let us remember that our advantage over Kant comes from our later position in time. Because of this advantage we can see why Kant used the thought-forms and instruments he did; more important, we can see how they conditioned his conclusions.

If any proof were needed of Kant's empirical drive, the theory of the sublime would supply it; because from the strictly systematic point of view, this whole theory is a work of supererogation.

¹ The estimate of Bernard (Introduction to *Kant's Critique of Judgment* [London, 1931], pp. xviiiif.) as to the relatively few writers on aesthetics with whom Kant was acquainted—i.e. Hume, Burke, Batteux, Lessing—is probably too low. cf. T. M. Greene: "A Reassessment of Kant's Aesthetic Theory," *supra*, p. 325n. In any case Kant shows himself well acquainted with the distinctive *temper* of aesthetic theorizing in his time—with the effect of what had been written, if not with many of the writings themselves—and this is for us the important point.

tion.² If Kant was out to reconcile nature and freedom in the third *Critique*, then he had already accomplished this in the doctrine of aesthetic form. The "double subjectivity" attaching to the sublime only opens up the new and perplexing problem of how, in this case, a genuine reconciliation can be said to take place. The introduction of the sublime meant for Kant extra work and extra trouble, which nothing in his "system" obliged him to undertake. His finished account of sublimity owes much to that system, as we shall see; but its motivation came from elsewhere—from the experience of Kant as a man of his time.

That time, as Carritt puts it, "was perhaps unrivalled for the rapid reversal of artistic orthodoxy. . . . A whole new world was being conquered for aesthetic satisfaction; but much of it was so Gothic, so rude, so shocking to the polite, the regular, and the pastoral, that men hesitated to call it beautiful, could hardly believe, indeed, that they felt it to be so."³ Kant's treatment of the sublime was born out of this primal experience—this confused but genuine appreciation—and can be understood only in relation to it. But the experience and the appreciation themselves have a history: swift and "revolutionary" as was their conquest of the Western world, they were still not without precedent or course of development. While therefore the background of Kant's theory of aesthetic form was provided by general and aesthetic *philosophy* from Descartes onward,⁴ the background of his doctrine of the sublime lies mainly in the literary and artistic *criticism* of the same period. Criticism is the rationalization of basic experience, of aesthetic taste and preference—a rationalization which thus lies one step nearer immediacy than the philosophy of art, which is in turn a rationalization of criticism. The background of the Kantian sublime is the way men have described and analyzed their aesthetic experiences—creative as well as contemplative—and not what they have speculatively inferred as to the validity of those experiences.⁵

² The treatment of genius, "aesthetic ideas," and fine art, in the latter part of the *Analytic*, is just as clearly superfluous from this viewpoint.

³ E. F. Carritt, *The Theory of Beauty* (London, 1928), p. 227.

⁴ See Barrows Dunham, "Kant's Theory of Aesthetic Form," *supra*, pp. 359-62.

⁵ I do not mean that there is an *absolute* difference between these two procedures, or that one ever occurs in the total absence of the other.

I shall try to sketch this background in some of its most salient features. The relevancy of these features is shown by the fact that they emerge, modified but unmistakable, in Kant's own theory.

II

All explicit theorizing on the sublime derives from Longinus; and the history of such theorizing is largely the history of the "Longinian tradition." In the treatise attributed to Longinus we can discern two sharply contrasting tendencies. The greater part of the work is concerned with rhetorical devices for attaining "sublime" speech; the underlying assumption here is that sublimity is a matter of handling and exploiting the medium in a certain way. Opposed to this general notion, on the other hand, are several passages in which "Longinus" reveals himself for the true Romantic that he is—a strange foreshadower of modern Idealistic aesthetics. Of his five "sources of the lofty style" he places first and foremost "the faculty of grasping great conceptions" and second the presence of "passion, strong and impetuous," adding that "these two constituents of sublimity are in most cases native-born, while those which follow come through art."⁶

The effect of these two criteria upon aesthetic theory in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was considerable. In modern terminology, what they both stressed was *content* in art, as opposed to rhetorical or formal ornamentation—*what* is expressed, rather than *how* it is expressed—the first criterion giving this "content" an intellectualistic, the second an emotionalistic twist. But Longinus grows more explicit. "'Sublimity,'" he tells us, "'is the note which rings from a great mind.' Thus it is that, without any utterance, a notion, unclothed and unsupported, often moves our wonder, because the very thought is great. . . . Great words issue, and it cannot be otherwise, from those whose thoughts are weighty. So it is on the lips of men of the highest spirit that words of rare greatness are found."⁷ And again: "the soul is raised by true sublimity, it gains a proud step upwards, as though itself had produced what it hears. Whenever therefore anything is heard . . . [which] does not dispose . . . [one's] mind to high thoughts, nor leave in it material for fresh reflection, beyond what is ac-

⁶ *Longinus On the Sublime* (Oxford, 1930), tr. by A. O. Prickard, Sec. 7, p. 13.

⁷ *ibid.*, Sec. 9, pp. 14f.

tually said; . . . this can never be true sublimity, being preserved so long only as it is heard.”⁸

If we concentrate upon this latter tendency in Longinus, ignoring the former one, then we can say that for him “the sublime is the expression of ultimate values in art, beyond the reach of rhetoric and her handmaidens.”⁹ And if we cannot quite regard this as an adequate statement of his whole position, we must recognize in it a fair indication of his influence upon later thought.¹⁰ It was Longinus’ emphasis on thought-content, to the depreciation of rhetoric, that appealed to his Renaissance and neo-classical readers and interpreters. Boileau, for example, who translated Longinus into French in 1674, and himself wrote an introductory essay to accompany the translation, draws a distinction between *the sublime* and *the sublime style*. The latter is a matter of rhetoric, the former one of content or spirit. Boileau deduces that the height of sublimity is attained where the *greatest thought* is expressed in the *simplest language* (as in the opening verses of *Genesis*), because thus the sublime thought strikes into the mind *immediately*, or as nearly so as expression will allow.¹¹ All this was of course excellent propaganda for Boileau’s Classicism.

Boileau was followed by Silvain (*Traité du Sublime*, 1732), who insists even more strongly upon the separation of sublime thought from rhetoric. Grandeur of discourse is again presented as the outcome of grandeur of soul; and in experiencing the sublime, the soul becomes aware of its own nobility. A rather startling anticipation of Kant may be seen here; though probably Silvain meant little more than that the faculty for apprehending the sublime must be adequate to its object.

⁸ *Longinus on the Sublime*, Sec. 7, p. 12. No very great imagination would be required to see Kantianisms in this passage.

⁹ S. H. Monk, *The Sublime in XVIII Century England* (New York, 1935), p. 20.

¹⁰ This influence has been accurately traced by Monk in the above work; what follows in this paragraph and the next is derived from his account.

¹¹ cf. Winckelmann, *History of Ancient Art among the Greeks*, tr. by Lodge (London, 1850), pp. 43-4: “All beauty is heightened by unity and simplicity . . . , for whatever is great in itself is elevated, when executed and uttered with simplicity. It is not more strictly circumscribed . . . because the mind can survey and measure it at a glance, and comprehend and embrace it in a single idea: but the very readiness with which it may be embraced places it before us in its true greatness, and the mind is enlarged, and likewise elevated, by the comprehension of it.”

Longinus' influence spread into England also, coloring the literary criticism of men like Addison. Along with much confusion, we find in Addison's remarks¹² the same distinction noted in Longinus and his French interpreters, and the same preference. Addison's names for the false and the true sublime are "greatness of bulk" (i.e. mere size) and "greatness of manner" respectively. In architecture, for instance, a Gothic cathedral may be very large, but the "meanness" of its style prevents it from being truly sublime! The barbarous cathedral has for polar opposite the Parthenon, whose nobility of style makes it sublime in spite of its relatively small size. From Addison's account it is hard to know whether "greatness of manner" signifies a certain nobility in the artist's intuition *qua* intuition, or whether it concerns the skill and general fidelity with which the intuition is embodied; this is where his confusion shows itself. Only on the former interpretation (probably the correct one, but still an interpretation) does Addison fit squarely into the Longinian-French tradition of "sublime conceptions."

In Germany, finally, this tradition reached full flower when it became the theoretical justification for the restless Romanticism of the *Sturm und Drang*. That Longinus recommended himself to such diverse natures as Boileau and Herder is certainly surprising. In his chief work on aesthetics, *Kalligone*,¹³ Herder made a point of rejecting the notion that pain or repulsion are in any way connected with sublimity. The negative element had been emphasized (perhaps unduly) by Burke and other English writers; but to Herder the humanitarian optimist and disciple of Rousseau, any such emphasis was simply intolerable. For Herder an experience of the sublime is directly an experience of universal values, with no mediation of displeasure. Like most Romantics, Herder was "intoxicated with the supersensible"¹⁴—an error which Kant's dualistic view of human nature, as under the sway of both sense and of reason, inhabiting at once the phenomenal and noumenal

¹² See *The Spectator*, papers 412, 415, 420, etc.

¹³ Published in 1800, ten years after the *Critique of Judgment*; but still to be regarded as part of the aesthetic "background" of Kant's time.

¹⁴ He forgot "dass der Mensch irdisches, sinnliches Geschöpf ist, und dass die physischen Gesetze von ihm als hindern erst überwunden werden müssen, bevor er zur übersinnlichen, idealen Höhe emporsteigen kann" (Arthur Seidl, *Zur Geschichte des Erhabenheitsbegriffes seit Kant* [Leipzig, n.d.], p. 17).

worlds, enabled him always to avoid. The important point for us is that Herder's view represents the climax of that emphasis upon spiritual "content," the growth of which we have been tracing. Whatever negative element is involved in the sublime comes necessarily from the external material or medium through which the "idea" is apprehended, whether this medium exhibits great magnitude or overwhelming force.¹⁶ Herder's rejection of the negative element amounts—practically, if not in strict logic—to a dismissal of the medium as entirely insignificant. What is significant is the "idea" that shines through.

If the German idealist Herder ignored the material entirely, the English sensationalist Burke saw nothing but this. Burke's famous treatise *On the Sublime and Beautiful* (1756) seems at first inspection to stand outside the Longinian tradition completely. The differences between the sublime and the beautiful are categorically set down by Burke as differences of the large *vs.* the small, the rough or uneven *vs.* the smooth, the unrhythymical *vs.* the rhythmical, etc.; and the peculiar effect of both is physiologically explained. A beautiful object relaxes the muscles and nerves into harmonious action; a sublime object arouses them to conflict and needed exercise—hence a feeling of the sublime, though immediately painful, grows ultimately pleasant. Burke pursues his physiology to intricate and fantastic extremes, but this is the substance of his account.¹⁷

¹⁶ Kant's "mathematical" and "dynamical" sublime respectively.

¹⁷ That Kant was familiar with Burke's essay is shown not only by the refutation of it in the *Critique of Judgment* (Sec. 29; Bernard, pp. 147ff.), but also by the contents of the early *Beobachtungen* (1764). For a summary of the main trend of this curious work see the opening of Professor Greene's essay, *op. cit.*, *supra*, pp. 323-6. Interspersed with all this facile anthropology, however, are a few remarks which point forward to the doctrine of the third *Critique*, and as such deserve mention.

Subconsciously, Kant was already dissatisfied with treating beauty and sublimity in terms of physical and anthropological differences, and was casting about for a more philosophical approach. And in his very first sentence he shows himself aware of what this new approach will involve—a concentration, not upon the observed properties of external objects, but rather upon the significance which these objects have for the feeling of a human subject: "Die verschiedenen Empfindungen des Vergnügen oder des Verdrusses beruhen nicht so sehr auf der Beschaffenheit der äusseren Dinge, die sie erregen, als auf dem jedem Menschen eigenen Gefühle, dadurch mit Lust oder Unlust gerührt zu werden" (*Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Dilthey (Berlin, 1905), Band II, p. 207). The "external things" are not the *ground* of our aesthetic experience, even though they may "arouse" it. A little later on Kant specifies more positively what this ground is, in the case of the sublime; for he links the latter to man's moral nature: "In moralischen

How are we to connect Burke's theory of the sublime with anything that preceded it? Certainly the accent on content or *meaning*, which marked the other writers, is totally lacking in this theory. The outlook is radically naturalistic and monistic throughout. Whereas the thinking of all the others was dominated by the Christian-Platonic notion of an "idea" somehow receiving expression in a material alien to itself, Burke's thought involves no such dualism, because for him the material element tells the whole story. This material does not convey to us an immaterial "message" or content; it stimulates us (i.e. our physical organism) to a certain kind of reaction. In Burke's picture of the situation everything takes place on the surface, and there is no third dimension—no *depth*. Such a view, we might suppose, has nothing to do with Longinus.

We remember, however, that Longinus was much concerned with rhetoric---i.e. with those *means* which a writer may employ to induce emotional reactions of a certain sort. This rhetorical emphasis is then identical with an insistence upon medium or material as one of the conditions of the sublime: it is one of the conditions because it can be disposed so as to arouse *feeling* in a sentient organism. Burke represents essentially a return to this rhetorical emphasis, long obscured by the emphasis on content; and the return was to some extent a good and needful one. For man is a sensuous being: physiology is relevant to all that he apprehends, for all that he apprehends is physiologically conditioned. Only it is conditioned by other factors as well. We begin to see that the truest theory of the sublime will be a theory of *expression* in the fullest sense, combining an account of *what* is expressed---i.e.

Eigenschaften ist wahre Tugend allein erhaben" (*ibid.*, p. 215) Mere good-will is based upon inclination, and as such it may attach itself to the beautiful "Die echte Tugend," however, rests upon invariant principles of reason, *Grundsätze*; and this *echte Tugend* is always reflected in the sublime:

"Demnach kann wahre Tugend nur auf Grundsätze gepropst werden, welche, je allgemeiner sie sind, desto erhabener und edler wird sie. Diese Grundsätze sind nicht speculativische Regeln, sondern das Bewusstsein eines Gefühls, das in jedem menschlichen Busen lebt. . . . Ich glaube, dass ich fasse alles zusammen, wenn ich sage, es sei das *Gefühl der Schönheit und der Würde der menschlichen Natur*. Die erstere ist ein Grund der allgemeinen Wohlgewohnheit, das zweite der allgemeinen Achtung, und wenn dieses Gefühl die grosseste Vollkommenheit in irgendeinem menschlichen Herzen hatte, so wurde dieser Mensch sich zwar auch lieben und schätzen. . ." (*ibid.*, p. 217).

In these few sentences there may be traced the germs of much that was to follow

the supersensible—with an account of how this expression takes place by wholly sensible means, under spatial and temporal forms.

III

The theory of genius is closely connected with the theory of the sublime: the two flowered in the same period, expressed the same state of mind, and contributed to the same result. And in the theory of genius the same two tendencies were at work—a spiritual or ideational emphasis on the one hand, and a material emphasis on the other, with the former gradually dominating and eclipsing the latter.

The invocation of the Muse in Homeric poetry is evidence that the notion of “genius” was present to antiquity. With Plato, indeed, it reached a highly self-conscious and self-critical stage. But in antiquity the idea of mysterious, supernatural inspiration was always balanced¹⁷ by a counter-emphasis on human *work* and *craftsmanship*. It is significant that in Greek, poetry is a “making.” In the modern world, which tends more and more to regard man as the center of things, endowing him with the attributes of divinity,¹⁸ this balance becomes highly unstable. The finite individual is credited with qualities more than finite; thus the poet comes to be thought of as one who views the truth in the way God views it—purely and absolutely and in its own light, not under sensuous and finite forms. He is “inspired”—but more significantly, his “inspiration” is the kind that knows no *constraint*. Exaltation of the artist’s “message,” and a corresponding disparagement of the material and limited *medium* in which he necessarily works, follow directly from such a doctrine of inspiration.

The development of the theory of “original genius,” from its tentative beginning in certain Renaissance critics and translators of Plato¹⁹ to its culmination in Blake’s hailing of “the Holy Ghost

¹⁷ Except in the case of Plato, insofar as he was theoretically an enemy of art.

¹⁸ The old physics may have been geocentric, but the old theology was anything but anthropocentric: humanity was directed to a goal outside and beyond itself.

¹⁹ The following are a few of the more specific monuments of the genius-theory:

Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499), translations of Plato and Plotinus (published in his collected works, 1561-1576);

William Sharpe, *Dissertation on Genius* (1755);

Edward Young, *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759);

Alexander Duff, *Essay on Original Genius and its Various Modes of Exertion* (1764);

John Pinkerton, *Letters of Literature* (1785);

in man," cannot here be followed in any detail. Always the inspiration of genius is opposed to the following of *rules*: true genius, according to most of these writers, reveals itself in *nonconformity*. We may agree that rules, *quâ* conceptual, have no binding authority over art; yet these rules, however misguided they may have been, were generally an expression of the fact that "the artist's vision" is at once embodied in a *medium*, having peculiarities and potentialities of its own which must be respected. Having rejected this expression of the fact, the genius-theory tended for a long time to neglect the fact itself.

The balance was restored only after Kant's time, and then by the weight of the theory's own assertions. For if the utterance of genius is *individual* and *unique* (as the theory claimed it was), this should effectively distinguish it from the abstractness and universality of "truth" properly so-called. Just as the mystic's illumination takes place at a particular time, in particular circumstances, so the poet may be said to apprehend the Truth and to express it—concretely, uniquely, with reference to the here-and-now of individual personality and individual circumstance. And among the particularizing elements of a work of art, the material medium obviously holds a central place. Thus a more equitable point of view became possible. *Truth* (the correspondence of idea to reality) is exclusively the function of science; hence the proponents of the genius-theory were speaking very metaphorically—really, employing an entirely different notion of "truth," as coherence, not correspondence—when they asserted that "the poet (*quâ* poet) apprehends the Truth" or that "eternal Truth is directly revealed to him." These high-flown statements cannot be other than metaphorical, because genius, as Kant puts it, "is a talent for *art*, and not one for science" (i.e. knowing in general).²⁰ In other words, it is a capacity for *creating*, and not simply for apprehending. The "truth" which an artist reveals to us is not anything viewed coldly and "objectively," from the outside; it is

William Blake, *Annotations to the Discourses of Sir Joshua Reynolds* (1808);
Shelley, *Defense of Poetry* (1821).

For these and other data connected with the theory of genius I am indebted to the instruction of Professor Asher Hinds, of the English Department, Princeton University. The ideas I have set forth, however, must in no way be attributed to him.

²⁰ *Critique of Judgment*, Sec. 49 (Bernard, p. 203); cf. Sec. 43 (Bernard, p. 183), Sec. 46 (Bernard, p. 190).

a dynamic sort of truth—a truth created and accomplished by him. Involved in this accomplishment is the pedestrian business of mastering a medium, so that it will embody and convey the artist's "vision." In accounting for genius, as in accounting for the sublime, we see that the only adequate theory will be a theory of expression, bent upon illuminating the actual process of artistic achievement.²¹

The one writer before Kant who came close to providing such a theory was Winckelmann. The problem Winckelmann was attacking was neither that of genius nor that of the sublime; it was rather the problem which Kant discussed under title of "pure" and "adherent" beauty. It is, however, closely related to both of the others; therefore Winckelmann's solution is instructive.

For Winckelmann ideal or "pure" beauty meant the absence of individuality: the beautiful figure, according to Greek standards, "is neither peculiar to any individual, nor yet expresses any one state of the mind or affection of the passions, because these blend with it strange lines and mar the unity."²² Beauty is like the best water, drawn from the spring itself and without taste or any other "foreign admixture." Winckelmann recognizes, however, that individuality cannot be eliminated from the actual procedure of art: we cannot as artists represent a man who is no particular man of no particular state of mind, but just a man in general: for if we strive our best to make him "general," his very generality becomes specific. Therefore Winckelmann introduces into art, of necessity, the element of "expression." From one point of view beauty is the antithesis of expression; but from another, more concrete viewpoint it is the *inclusion*, dominance, or incorporation of the latter. "A figure may . . . be called beautiful, even though expression should preponderate over beauty, just as we give the name of wine to a liquor of which the larger part is water. . . . Beauty without expression might properly be termed insignificant, and expression without beauty unpleasing; but, from the action of one upon the other, and the union of the two opposing qualities, beauty derives additional power to affect, to persuade, and to convince."²³

²¹ My conclusion will be that Kant succeeded in working out such a theory, in the case of genius, but that he failed in the case of the sublime. cf. *infra*, pp. 401f.

²² *History of Ancient Art among the Greeks*, tr. by Lodge, p. 44.

²³ *ibid.*, p. 156.

As a more or less empirical account of artistic process and aesthetic experience, these words of Winckelmann leave little to be desired. Moreover, the way in which this account might be extended to the special case of the sublime is not difficult to see. The trouble, we well know, is that Kant could never be satisfied with a more or less empirical account of anything. For him there was something deeper in the aesthetic life than any literary or art critic had ever laid hold of; and to this deeper factor we must now turn.

IV

For the modern reader, Kant comes upon aesthetics almost too casually: the treatment of *aesthetic judgment* forms a subdivision in the treatment of *judgment* itself. This is a warning that the Kantian empiricism, while genuine, has definite limits. It is limited by Kant's desire to make his philosophy a rounded and coherent whole; and therefore the later portions of this philosophy are conditioned by what has gone before. The method and results of the first *Critique* necessarily underlie the other two; in some sense, moral and aesthetic experience are forced to take what is *left over* from the analysis of science—i.e. what is implied by, or at least consistent with, that analysis. To be sure, Kant is never crude in this procedure. And since we are beings who cannot think everything at once, we must needs proceed in *some* order and by *some* rule of subordination, if we are to philosophize at all. Still, Kant's most suggestive thinking on a subject often occurs when he applies himself directly to the subject itself, letting it carry him away more or less to the neglect of systematic considerations. Perhaps the best example of this is provided by the later sections of the *Analytic of Aesthetic Judgment*.²⁴

Such passages, however, are incidental to Kant's main design. This design, in each of the three *Critiques*, was centered about the problem of *validity*. In scientific investigation, moral action, and aesthetic preference we lay claim to the *agreement of all men* in a quite definite and peculiar fashion. What we claim is, not that we have *as a matter of fact* correctly analyzed the phenomena before us, or acted rightly in these particular circumstances, or adequately appraised a given work of art; but rather, that *if* we have

²⁴ Beginning, say, with Sec. 41 and running to the end of the *Analytic* (Sec. 54).

succeeded in any of these, then everyone *ought* to agree with us.²⁵ With regard to each of the three faculties (understanding, reason, judgment) for whose operation such universal agreement is claimed, Kant inquires how such an ideal agreement is possible—i.e. how the *claim*, put forward by common sense, can be justified. And in each case, justification takes place by the discovery of an *a priori* principle (*nature* for scientific investigation, *freedom* for moral action, *finality* for aesthetic appraisal) without which the world of our experience would simply not be what it is.²⁶

The *a priori* principle involved in all reflective judgment is the principle of subjective finality.²⁷ We think of objects as designed for our progressive apprehension, which is always subsuming them under higher and still higher laws—striving to order them in a coherent whole. Not that the objects really are so designed, but simply that we must think them as designed, in order to attain “a thoroughly interconnected whole of experience.”²⁸ And when we meet with objects that do seem to be so designed for our apprehension, it is natural that we should feel pleasure in the encounter.²⁹ This is what happens when we call an object beautiful: in the presence of the object, our faculties of imagination and understanding have been stimulated to harmonious activity, and we therefore view the object as designed for our proper apprehension.³⁰ Such a judgment (whether in any particular case it is valid or invalid) lays claim to universal agreement, and rightly so, because the subjective finality which it posits is a prerequisite of experience generally.³¹

We find ourselves capable, however, of deriving pleasure not only from the *harmony* of our faculties in the presence of an object, but also from a seeming *disharmony*—not only when our mind

²⁵ cf. *Critique of Judgment*, *Introduction*, Sec. 5 (Bernard, p. 22); Sec. 37 (Bernard, p. 165); Sec. 22 (Bernard, pp. 94-5); Sec. 29 (Bernard, p. 149). cf. also *infra*, pp. 395f. and note 46.

²⁶ For a more detailed account of Kant's rationalistic presuppositions, see Dunham, *op. cit.*, *supra*.

²⁷ Kant, *op. cit.*, *Introduction*, Sec. 7 (Bernard, p. 34).

²⁸ Meredith's rendering of “*eine durchgängig zusammenhängende Erfahrung*” (Kant's *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* [Oxford, 1911], *Introduction*, Sec. 5, p. 23).

²⁹ Kant, *op. cit.*, *Introduction*, Sec. 6 (Bernard, pp. 27-30).

³⁰ *ibid.*, Sec. 35 (Bernard, pp. 161-2).

³¹ *ibid.*, Sec. 38—the actual deduction (Bernard, pp. 165-6).

comes to *rest* in an object, but also when it is set in violent *motion*.³² At first glance there would seem to be no finality involved in this case, but *contra*-finality—the exact opposite.³³ Instead of seeming to be designed for our apprehension, the object baffles and thwarts our apprehension at every turn: it is either so large that we cannot take it all in, or so powerful that it threatens to annihilate us. Yet if we analyze the state of mind induced by such an object, we can see that a higher kind of harmony—a harmony through disharmony—results. For if we are unable to “take in” a very large object, this means that our faculty of imagination is incapable of presenting us with the *intuited whole* which reason demands; and the supremacy of reason is thus *exhibited* by contrast with the imagination’s incapacity. The judgment that such an object is sublime “represents . . . merely the subjective play of the mental powers (imagination and reason) as harmonious by virtue of their very contrast. For just as in the estimate of the beautiful imagination and *understanding* by their concert generate subjective finality of the mental faculties, so imagination and *reason* do so here by their conflict—that is to say they induce a feeling of our possessing a pure and self-sufficient reason, or a faculty for the estimation of magnitude, whose preeminence can only be made intuitively evident by the inadequacy of that faculty [i.e. imagination] which in the presentation of magnitudes (of objects of sense) is itself unbounded.”³⁴ Likewise, when we encounter an object of overwhelming force, we feel ourselves as *sensible* beings powerless to prevail against it; but this powerlessness shows up our real power by contrasting with it. “The irresistibility of the might of nature forces upon us the recognition of our physical helplessness as beings of nature, but at the same time reveals a faculty of estimating ourselves as independent of nature, and discovers a preeminence above nature that is the foundation of a self-preservation of quite another kind from that which may be assailed and brought into danger by external nature.”³⁵ Thus the dynamical sublime (of force) as well as the mathematical sublime (of mag-

³² *ibid.*, Sec. 27 (Bernard, p. 120); Sec. 24 (Bernard, pp. 105-6).

³³ *ibid.*, Sec. 23 (Bernard, p. 103).

³⁴ *ibid.*, Sec. 27, Meredith's rendering, p. 107 (Bernard, p. 121).

³⁵ *ibid.*, Sec. 28, Meredith's rendering, p. 111 (Bernard, p. 125).

nitude) exhibits concretely the harmony of sensibility and reason by virtue of their very contrast.

Those objects of nature (or art) which occasion such harmony are not, however, themselves judged to be sublime, as the objects which occasion the harmony of imagination and understanding are judged to be beautiful. For the finality is not a finality on the part of the object, but purely a finality on the part of the subject.³⁶ Thus "we express ourselves incorrectly if we call any *object of nature* sublime, although we can quite correctly call many objects of nature beautiful. For how can that be marked by an expression of approval, which is apprehended in itself as being a violation of purpose? All we can say is that the object is fit³⁷ for the presentation of a sublimity which can be found in the mind; for no sensible form can contain the sublime properly so-called. This concerns only Ideas of Reason, which, although no adequate presentation of them is possible, by this inadequacy that admits of sensible presentation, are aroused and summoned into the mind."³⁸ Because all this is so, judgments on the sublime do not require any deduction, over and above their exposition.³⁹ their claim to universal validity has already been justified, because the *a priori* principle of subjective finality, which they involve, has been laid bare. Where no assertion is made about the object, nothing more than this simple exposition is required.

Such are the salient points of Kant's theory, however we might wish them otherwise. The whole doctrine proceeds from a deep and all-absorbing philosophical interest which marks it off sharply from any of the earlier literary and popular treatments of the subject. Facts of aesthetic experience fall into line with this interest—some well, some ill—but in any case they fall into line. The viewpoint of *judgment*, which is the viewpoint of the aesthetic *observer*, thoroughly conditions Kant's central argument. A theory of expression is possible only if we regard aesthetic creation, as well as aesthetic contemplation; but Kant regards only aesthetic contemplation—until it is too late to change. The beauty and sub-

³⁶ *Critique of Judgment*, Sec. 23 (Bernard, p. 103), Sec. 28 (Bernard, p. 129), Sec. 30 (Bernard, pp. 151-2).

³⁷ Better, "lends itself to the presentation of a sublimity . . .," etc. (Meredith, p. 92).

³⁸ *ibid.*, Sec. 23 (Bernard, p. 103).

³⁹ *ibid.*, Sec. 30 (Bernard, pp. 150-2).

limity of nature—to which contemplation alone is applicable—thus take precedence over the beauty and sublimity of art—to which creation is as relevant as contemplation. Altogether, the best description of Kant's aesthetics appears in its title: most fundamentally, it is a theory in which aesthetic experience is treated as "aesthetic judgment."⁴⁰

Although it is a different kind of theory altogether, motivated by a different interest and determined by a different point of view, still Kant's account of the sublime can be seen to preserve the two tendencies or modes of emphasis which marked all previous theorizing on the subject. The material emphasis is present in *that which occasions* our feeling of the sublime—i.e. physical nature insofar as it exhibits immensity or power. However Kant may disparage it, this occasion is necessary to set the whole process going. That the immensity needs only to be relative to our apprehension, and the power relative to our resistance—and hence that the occasion is "accepted" merely, not "given"⁴¹—does not alter the matter. There must still be a definite physical occasion or stimulus, and this stimulus must have a certain definite character, relative to our capacity for taking it in or for standing against it. On this score Kant does not after all stand so very far from Burke.⁴²

The other emphasis—that of content—is really the basis of Kant's whole theory; yet it receives a curiously inverted expression. On Kantian presuppositions, content could not possibly be made the *object* of aesthetic judgment, because this would at once introduce concepts and render the judgment determinate. Hence when content enters the picture, it enters on the side of the subject: being stimulated in a certain way by a certain kind of object,

⁴⁰ cf. Dunham, *op. cit.*, *supra*, pp. 374f. One must, of course, understand what Kant means by *reflective* judgment, before any such description can appear in its proper light. Just so far as judgment is reflective, rather than determinant, so far it contains a creative element. Only the particular is *given*, not the universal. But since the particular *is given*, reflective judgment can never be creative in the full and proper sense: it remains an estimate, passed by us, upon an object which is what it is quite apart from us, and which we cannot change or determine (so long as we retain the judgmental attitude). Actual artistic creation is of course a perpetual oscillation between reflective judgment and pure creation—as Kant would have it, between the operation of "taste" and "genius."

⁴¹ *Critique of Judgment*, Sec. 30 (Bernard, p. 151).

⁴² It is to be remembered that Kant has nothing but admiration for Burke's theory as psychology (cf. Bernard, p. 148). His claim is simply that Burke must be supplemented, because "something deeper is involved." cf. Greene, *op. cit.*, *supra*, pp. 354f.

we become conscious not of *its* sublimity, but of our own. And this sublimity consists in moral elevation—what is supremely valuable and worthy of respect.

No one sympathetic with Kant's philosophy in general will deny that in the *Critique of the Aesthetic Judgment* he accomplished what he set out to accomplish—the validation of our judgments on the beautiful and the sublime, by bringing them under the *a priori* principle of subjective finality. The only question is whether this achievement produced a theory which is empirically defensible. For the sublime, this question translates itself into another: Did Kant succeed in combining the material emphasis with the emphasis on value or content, so as to show the mutual relevance of these two emphases in a coherent whole?

V

The answer to this question hinges upon the rôle of the "occasion." Does the claimed universality of the judgment on the sublime extend to the occasion, or does it not? Do we mean to insist that everyone should agree with us in feeling sublimity here and now, in imputing it to this particular object? Or do we merely mean that everyone should agree with us in judging his own moral nature sublime, whatever may have occasioned him to make this judgment? Meredith has set forth the objections in the way of either interpretation.⁴³

The difficulty with supposing that universality does extend to the occasion lies in Kant's explicit denial of the need of a deduction in the case of judgments on the sublime, over and above their exposition. This denial is crucial to Kant's whole treatment of the sublime, and could hardly have been made lightly; at the same time its meaning seems clear. "To say that the occasion is appropriate for all men involves the immediate *displeasure*, out of which the pleasure in the sublime emerges, being connected with the representation of that occasion in just the same way as pleasure is connected with the representation of the object called beautiful. . . . As it was this immediate synthesis of pleasure, with the representation of the object, that necessitated all the elaborate critical investigation undertaken in the case of the beautiful, Kant would

⁴³ J. C. Meredith, *Kant's Critique of Aesthetic Judgment*, pp. lxxv-lxxix.

have had as much trouble . . . in the case of the occasion of the sublime as he had . . . in the case of the beautiful. He would have avoided no complication by removing sublimity from nature to the ideas of reason.”⁴⁴

This objection, together with various corollaries of it which he adduces, seems to Meredith decisive. It is his opinion, therefore, that all reference to the occasion must be abandoned, just so far as we are dealing with a judgment on the sublime, strictly defined. Universality belongs solely to the *ground* of our delight; it cannot be extended to the occasion, because any occasion whatever may serve to arouse a feeling of the sublime: thus a judgment on the sublime cannot possibly go wrong, since all occasions are equally appropriate. “The occasion is supposed to be accepted by all men, and the question to be merely one of susceptibility for ideas. But if the question of the appropriateness of the occasion were raised, and if it were persisted in, then it is difficult to see how it could be decided except by a reference to taste.”⁴⁵ For every judgment on the sublime is *also* an “aesthetic reflective judgment,” and to such judgments the question of appropriateness is always relevant. Just insofar as a judgment is *on the sublime*—i.e. having this particular character which marks it off from the others of its genus—so far taste and appropriateness of the occasion are *irrelevant*; but any such judgment is in reality an abstraction.

If this interpretation of Kant's theory be correct, what we have called “the material emphasis” is abandoned altogether, and the sublime is presented purely and simply as a consciousness of unembodied value. It may still be empirically the case that some objects are more effective than others in arousing a feeling of the sublime, but this will be mere matter of fact, having nothing to do with the validity which we claim for the feeling. For the judgment on the sublime is not simply to the effect that such and such an occasion *actually does* arouse a feeling of respect within me; it is to the effect that this same feeling of respect *ought* to be entertained by everyone.⁴⁶ If the occasion is omitted from this latter statement, it is

⁴⁴ Meredith, *op. cit.*, p. lxxvii.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p. lxxx.

⁴⁶ cf. Greene, *op. cit.*, *supra*, p. 342; also Kant, *op. cit.*, Sec. 37 (Bernard, p. 165). Kant is here speaking of the judgment on the beautiful; but he is speaking of it insofar as it is an *a priori* judgment, which the judgment on the sublime is also.

omitted from the judgment on the sublime. So far as the experience of sublimity is concerned, the material element thus hangs at a loose end: factual efficacy it may have, but no significance. It is not tied in with the element of content, or related to it in any but a contingent sense.

In supporting his interpretation, Meredith points to the variations among individuals in respect of imagination and power of resistance. Thus an occasion which seems great or mighty to one person, and thereby arouses a feeling of the sublime, does not seem so to another, and utterly fails to arouse it. This argument seems fallacious, because the same sort of thing might be said about the beautiful. Generally speaking, factual variations are no disproof of validity. What *actually* stirs imagination and understanding to harmonious activity, in the case of the beautiful, may vary as widely as what stirs them to disharmony in the case of the sublime. *Invalid* arousal of a sense of the beautiful is "mere charm"; invalid arousal of a sense of the sublime is "mere emotion." Proper taste has not been exercised in the one case, proper feeling in the other. On Kant's part, evidences of some such view are not lacking.

Meredith himself presents a few of them. "Apart from the particular occasion, there is no *particular instance* subsumed under the rule. Unless universal agreement is claimed as to the occasion, it is not claimed for the judgment upon the sublime as an *aesthetic reflective judgment*."⁴⁷ Having defined "reflective judgment" as carefully as he did in his *Introduction*, it seems incredible that Kant should have failed to notice that his "judgment on the sublime" did not conform to that definition.

Again, "it is . . . only the occasion that distinguishes one judgment upon the sublime from another. Kant says that the judgment upon the sublime is a singular judgment. If the reference to the occasion drops out, then it is certainly singular, for there is only one such judgment in respect of the mathematically sublime, viz. 'The infinite is sublime,' and one in respect of the dynamically sublime, viz. 'Our moral nature is sublime'!"⁴⁸ But Kant everywhere seems to envision a plurality of judgments on the sublime;

⁴⁷ Meredith, *op. cit.*, p. lxxvi.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, pp. lxxvi-lxxvii.

and everywhere⁴⁹ he gives us the impression that *these* judgments are the ones for which universal agreement is claimed.

The two most explicit passages on this score are found in Sections 25 and 29. In the first of these, Kant is dealing with the "unqualified assertion" of greatness: the claim of this assertion, he says, "is one to universal agreement." "The judgments 'That man is beautiful' and 'He is tall' do not purport to speak only for the judging subject, but, like theoretical judgments, they demand the assent of everyone."⁵⁰ It is true that Kant draws a clear distinction between asserting *without qualification* that a thing is great, and saying that it is *absolutely great*; but what is the point of his discussing the former, and specifically calling them "aesthetic reflective judgments . . . upon the representation [of an object]," unless they are included in the latter as an essential element?

The second passage occurs in the section on modality. "Hereon is based the necessity of that agreement of the judgment of others about the sublime with our own which we include in the latter. For just as we charge with want of *taste* the man who is indifferent when passing judgment upon an object of nature that we regard as beautiful; so we say of him who remains unmoved in the presence of that which we judge to be sublime, he has no *feeling*. But we claim both from every man. . . ."⁵¹ From this we gather the very interesting notion that feeling may determine the appropriateness of judgments on the sublime, just as taste determines the appropriateness of judgments on the beautiful.

In order to follow out this suggestion, there was needed a more realistic view of the object than Kant employed. This, indeed, is what causes all the trouble. In the strict Kantian sense of the word, *there is no "object"* that can be called sublime—no *aesthetic object*, that is, to which the harmony of reason and imagination can be

⁴⁹ Except, perhaps, in the remark on Burke (Kant, *op. cit.*, Sec. 29—Bernard, pp. 149-50), where Kant persistently speaks of *taste* (as having a more than "egoistic" validity) and persistently avoids mentioning feeling or anything connected with the sublime. This passage certainly supplies an *argumentum ab omissione* for Meredith's view.

⁵⁰ Kant, *op. cit.*, Sec. 25, tr. by Meredith, p. 95 (Bernard, p. 107).

⁵¹ *ibid.*, Sec. 29 (Bernard, p. 131). There is one other passage bearing on this whole question in Sec. 39 (Bernard, p. 168). Here Kant specifically uses the words "appropriate occasion" in connection with the sublime. It is still not certain, however, that he is thinking of some occasions as *more* appropriate than others; the passage may be interpreted to mean that all occasions are equally appropriate.

referred. The very essence of the sublime lies in the fact that experience of it is not directed to an "object," in the sense of "object correlative to an apprehending subject," object of *apprehension*. For the appearance which we are striving to take in is not apprehended *as such*—not comprehended in a single intuition—hence a mere motion of the mental powers results. If the claim to agreement on the sublime is to be extended to the occasion in any sense, we shall have to stop thinking of this occasion as a Kantian "object." The notion of an "indeterminate object," on the other hand, might have seemed to Kant a contradiction in terms; yet it was this notion that he was working toward, insofar as he accorded the occasion any significance whatever. The occasion of a judgment on the sublime is something felt and indefinite. We may call it Niagara or the Fifth Symphony, but this is only a crude approximation. It is Niagara or the Fifth Symphony, insofar as these are more than we can take in—therefore not objects correlative to a subject's apprehension, but objects waiting for, and thus independent of, a subject's apprehension. Call this occasion an "object" or not—say that we judge correctly of it by "taste" or by "feeling"—it is still something in the material world, to which our judgments on the sublime may legitimately extend, as common sense tells us that they do. Only so can the material emphasis be brought into relation with Kant's peculiarly subjective emphasis on content. This latter emphasis remains as the *explanatory ground* of our delight in the sublime. In appreciating the sublime, what we really and ultimately appreciate is the harmony of reason and imagination, just as in appreciating the beautiful, what we finally appreciate is the harmony of imagination and understanding. But then the material occasion really is sublime, to just the same extent that the material object really is beautiful.⁶²

It should also be pointed out that only on this line of thought can the judgmental point of view, which Kant professes, be maintained. Certainly it is not maintained if we regard the occasion as accepted merely; because judgment requires a particular to be

⁶² Only the equivalence of the two types of aesthetic judgment is here in question, not the ultimate status of both. We are concerned only to show how the *double subjectivity* of the sublime may be avoided. For a treatment of the more basic "subjectivity," common to beauty and sublimity on Kant's account, see Greene, *op. cit.*, *supra*, pp. 345ff.

judged.⁵³ Insofar as Kant regards the occasion as merely accepted, he is in fact describing for us not aesthetic appreciation, but *artistic creation* in its primary phase. For the artist begins precisely from an occasion—i.e. some stimulus of the external world—which does not force itself upon him as beautiful in its “given” state, but which he freely accepts as raw material. The realization of the artistic possibilities of this occasion constitutes the artist’s “intuition.” But then, although he does not begin from anything “given,” it is his business to produce something “given”—something with a definite form and a beautiful form. Or it may equally be his business to produce something sublime—i.e. a work of art with a form so vast and difficult⁵⁴ that it cannot all be taken in, and thus gives the impression of being inexhaustible. That which we must account Kant’s best-considered word on the sublime⁵⁵ has nothing to say of this further process or of its result: only the intuitive first phase is considered, and it is not considered how this primitive intuition passes over into matter by way of artistic embodiment. The artist’s product can be recognized for what it is, with reference to the sublime, only when *some* objects are regarded as uniquely significant—uniquely appropriate occasions on which to pass the judgment that *here* is sublimity.

What may be called Kant’s second theory leaves room for all of this. If feeling and taste are parallel determinants of the appropriateness of aesthetic judgments, then the material element can be admitted into our theory of the sublime, just as it was admitted into the theory of the beautiful. And the process of creating sublime works of art can be recognized, along with that of creating beautiful ones.⁵⁶ But Kant never followed up this second theory: it violated too many of his established modes of thought.⁵⁷ For us

⁵³ cf. *supra*, p. 396.

⁵⁴ Alexander’s distinction between “easy” and “difficult” beauty is really a distinction between the beautiful and the sublime. cf. *Beauty and Other Forms of Value* (London, 1933), pp. 40-41, 167.

⁵⁵ i.e., that the occasion is *not* included in a judgment on the sublime as such. *Supra*, pp. 394f.

⁵⁶ We need not deny that all sublime works are *also* beautiful, or at any rate that most of them are. We may well agree with Herder’s definition of the sublime as “*das höchste Schöne*.” Yet a different principle is involved in the production of “lofty” beauty from that involved in mere beauty as such; and the process itself is different.

⁵⁷ We have seen that it would necessitate a redefinition of “object.” It would also, very obviously, compel a revision of Kant’s contemptuous opinion of “feeling.” cf. Dunham, *op. cit.*, *supra*, pp. 367ff.

it remains an interesting suggestion—a way in which the sublime might have been treated, without reaching so paradoxical a conclusion.

VI

“Kant’s account of the sublime is interposed between two parts of his account of the beautiful, and appears to have had the effect of forcing upon his mind the deeper symbolic character of beauty, which at first he was disposed to find only in sublimity.”⁵⁸ Narrowness is in fact the charge to be laid against both the theory of aesthetic form⁵⁹ and the theory of the sublime, so long as these are considered by themselves. With regard to the sublime, this narrowness reflects itself in Kant’s devotion to the judgmental point of view, his concentration upon nature to the exclusion of art and the process of its creation, and his consequent failure to bring the material object into any kind of systematic relation with his theory of sublimity as a whole. The narrowness of the theory of taste and form is largely corrected by the final sections of the *Analytic of the Aesthetic Judgment*, the more concrete character of which has been noted by all commentators. Having completed his systematic task of validation, Kant is willing to descend from abstraction to actual aesthetic and artistic experience; he is willing to admit that elements which he has ideally separated are in fact always combined. The theory of the sublime is more unfortunate to just the extent that it does not share in this concrete restatement. We are especially disappointed not to find the sublimity of nature brought into relation with the discussion of “intellectual interest” and of moral ideas as the content of art.⁶⁰ This relation would appear to be that of the purely aesthetic⁶¹ to what is at once aesthetic and conceptual, or again of mere aesthetic contemplation to the more concrete process of artistic creation. To stress the fact that the judgment on the sublime is “purely aesthetic,” however, only accentuates the difficulty about the occasion. And there is not only the enjoyment of nature, and the creation of art, but

⁵⁸ Bosanquet, *A History of Aesthetic* (London, 1904), p. 275.

⁵⁹ cf. Dunham, *op. cit.*, *supra*.

⁶⁰ See especially Secs. 42, 52.

⁶¹ cf. the passage (in the *General Remark* appended to Sec. 29 [Bernard, p. 137]) in which Kant speaks of the starry heaven as sublime, but insists that we must take it “just as it strikes the eye,” etc.

also the enjoyment of art—with reference to which it is unsatisfactory to say merely that taste and moral feeling are mechanically “combined.” They *are* combined, but with mutual relevance, answering to the mutual relevance of aesthetic form and “moral ideas” in the work of art.

If Kant failed to round out his theory of the sublime, he succeeded in formulating an account of genius which is worthy of all admiration. Here, at long last, we find the theory of expression for which we have been looking—of genius as “the expression of aesthetic ideas.” Here we find just that balance between inner and outer, inspiration and craftsmanship, intuition and communication—between “finding out ideas for a given concept” and “hitting upon the expression for them”⁶²—which elsewhere Kant fell short of achieving. Here, in short, we find the culmination of previous theories and a foundation for those of later date.

Of Kant's treatment of the sublime we cannot honestly say any of these things. To the traditional emphasis on content he gave the most profound interpretation it has ever received. But the material emphasis was ignored. Kant never really grasped the essentially sacramental character of art—the way in which a material medium can express a content trivial or profound. He never really understood—a thing so simple and obvious, that only a philosopher could overlook it—how the artist uses and exploits his medium to the best possible advantage⁶³—employing big or forceful means to express great content, smaller means to convey the more intimate side of life. This failure to relate the material and spiritual emphases to one another is reflected in all the difficulty over the “occasion” of the sublime. Yet even the abstract subjectivity of Kant's sublime was a mistake which served its purpose and perhaps had to be made. Only by assuring himself that an *aesthetical* judgment could involve a reference to value or content, and thus rest upon an *a priori* principle of reason, could he feel justified in extending the narrow basis of formal beauty which he had previously laid down.

When all is said, Kant's account of the sublime remains a living piece of work today; and this is no little praise. In an age impatient with “the kinds,” and consequently impatient with the sublime,

⁶² *ibid.*, Sec. 49 (Bernard, p. 202).

⁶³ cf. Greene, *op. cit.*, *supra*, p. 353.

Kant makes it clear at least that he is not dealing merely with a "kind," arbitrarily set off by minds fond of pigeonholing, but with aesthetic experience in one of its most significant aspects. And his vacillations and fumblings are more instructive than the smooth truisms of other writers. Whenever men again begin to speculate on how, and by what authority, certain objects of nature and certain works of art produce an exaltation not of this world, they will find it possible to learn much from Kant.

XVII .
KANT AND RELIGION

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KANT AND RELIGION

“NOT only a light of the world, but a whole solar system in one,” thus J. P. F. Richter described Kant. In art, astronomy, mathematics, ethics, physics, theology, geography, philosophy, law, logic, anthropology, and fortification, the versatile citizen of Königsberg was at home. In several of those fields he was an expert; in some an innovator. So luxuriant is his wide-ranging thought that not merely those that assimilate and transform it according to their needs but even close and masterly commentators find not one Kant but many.

An agnostic and an atheist, some call him, no hero for an essay on religion. Did not reaction to the excessive pietism of his youth lead him to the scientific studies of his early manhood and to the sceptical rationalism of the first *Critique*? After reaching years of discretion, did he ever enter a church? Was not the *Critique of Practical Reason* written, as Heine suggested, to console Lampe? Vaihinger makes a good case for holding freedom, duty, and God to be as heuristic as any idea of speculative reason.

There is much there, certainly, not favorable to the normal flowering of religion, but not enough to give a just and balanced view of Kant's life and thought. He reacted vigorously against the fanaticism, superstition, and hypocrisy to which he was exposed early. But the fault was not all on one side. Though sensitive, Kant was neither by nature nor occupation susceptible to many common emotions. The foibles and frailties of life, which a Fielding might regard with patience, scarcely suited his rigorous temperament. While believing in the necessity of a thoroughly purified church as a bulwark of morality,¹ he found in ecclesiastical institutions nothing to meet his personal requirements. But his intellectual and moral interest in religion thrived from the first and lasted until his death. It appears in most of his principal writings, including some of his scientific papers, and in the biographical material about him. During his rationalistic, dogmatic,

¹ *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, tr. by T. M. Greene and H. H. Hudson (Chicago 1934), pp. 139f., 186-7.

pre-critical days, he thought that Divine Existence could be proved by logic and natural reason. He tried to persuade astronomy to declare the glory of God.² While preparing his *Critique of Pure Reason*, he delivered lectures on ethics,³ which manifest an unaffected belief in the God of his youth, somewhat polished, to be sure, by reason and morality.⁴ The first *Critique* in no way repudiates a statement he made about eighteen years before its publication: "It is very necessary that one should be convinced of God's existence, but not so necessary that one should prove it."⁵ In that *Critique* he showed the limits of speculative reason partly in order to make room for faith. From the primacy assigned to practical reason, in the second *Critique*, it is clear that for him as for Socrates "intellectual scepticism"—to use Dr. Paul Elmer More's words—must rightly submit to "spiritual affirmation." Like Pascal and Socrates, Kant belonged to those that cry, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

The impression of mind, order, intelligibility, in nature is so strong that, as he realized, it does not wax and wane with the adequacy of our interpretations of it. That mere design (a common eighteenth century interpretation of the impression) fails to do it justice, he showed in his refutation of the physico-theological argument. Design imposed by an external mind leads at best to a demonology rather than to a theology. Something more deeply interfused he found in his conception of a natural purpose. But his mechanical view of nature prevented him from realizing that

² cf. *Allgemeine Naturgeschichte und Theorie des Himmels*, *Lectures on Ethics* by Immanuel Kant, tr. by L. Infield (London, 1930), etc., especially pp. 334ff.

³ *Immanuel Kants Werke*, ed. by E. Cassirer (Berlin, 1912), Vol. I.

⁴ He then thought of God as one, supreme, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, holy lawgiver and creator, benevolent ruler and upholder, and just judge, towards whom reverence, love, and filial fear are due. (In such matters he allowed a certain amount of analogy and anthropomorphism as is inevitable and helpful.) Loving performance of God's will is the only way of honoring Him and of deserving His grace. In sacraments and ceremonial he saw little but sentimental waste of energy. He suffered from an intellectual's timidity about the material, the dramatic, and the emotional, as more likely to upset than to enrich life. And a kind of sectarian jealousy often made him begrudge others what he could not appreciate himself. He emphasized God the judge more than God the savior on account of his pessimistic but well grounded suspicion of our propensity to cease from moral fight. His profound respect for Christ did not still his fear of idolatry in Christocentrism. (cf. *Lectures on Ethics*, pp. 87, 97, 112.)

⁵ Last sentence of *Der einzige mögliche Beweisgrund zu einer Demonstration des Daseins Gottes*, *Immanuel Kants Werke*, ed. by E. Cassirer, Vol. II, p. 172.

organisms are as real and objective as mechanisms, that axiology and teleology are as much (and as little) categories of the understanding as the logical and the mechanical categories that, for him, alone reveal phenomena. Because he could not admit that, he treats teleology, on the whole, as merely regulative, and mechanism as constitutive. Nature as an object of sense, he asserts, must be understood and explained mechanically; as a subject for reflection, it must be interpreted teleologically. Science, as we might paraphrase him, shows the "how" (the conceivable); reason asks for the "why" (the intelligible), not only of organic life but of all that exists. As the only satisfactory answer to "why" is a reason, we are obliged to subordinate mechanism to teleology, to consider the former a means of expressing the latter, and to assume that reality is not a brute fact but an expression of reason, of intelligence, of God.⁶ All this, however, Kant warns, is heuristic, not ostensive; it is an indispensable working principle, but speculative reason can neither prove nor disprove the existence of the God it points to.⁷

Similarly he treats the idea of the unconditioned, which is so closely connected with the idea of the absolute that in an impressionistic sketch like this they can be considered together. Besides always asking why, or for what purpose, anything and everything is, speculative reason continually seeks unity in the diversity of experience. The idea of complete unity prevents science from complacently imagining it has reached its goal. In fact we can never suppose that; for all that the understanding deals with is contingent, relative, and finite. The perfect, the unconditioned, the absolute cannot, therefore, be found among phenomena; it must presumably be noumenal. But for Kant this is only a demand of pure reason. It is not even an hypothesis, because an hypothesis can be tested by the understanding and verified in phenomena. The ideas that point towards God as a "flawless ideal" are only regulative for speculative reason. They add no knowledge to the detailed course of science but are requisite for a general appreciation of reality.

⁶ Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, tr. by J. H. Bernard (London, 1914), pp. 329-33, 338-9.

⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 311-12, 320.

Going no further than these two arguments, we may agree with Kant that, not only as baldly outlined here but no matter how carefully they are stated, they are neither logically nor religiously compelling. Logical compulsion is an ideal never fully exemplified. Even if every definition is impeccable and every link unquestionable, doubt always attaches to the validity and the scope of the premises and to the matter of the argument. Logical and metaphysical entities—the unconditioned, the supreme intelligence, the absolute—have to be quickened not only, as Kant knew, by the moral argument,⁸ but also by religion to become the living God.

But Kant leaves regulative ideas in an unsatisfactory state. At least two reasons account for this. One was a narrow, unhistorical way of meeting the situation. He singles out arguments in their most abstract form and rejects them on account of merely logical flaws, as, of course, he should from a merely logical point of view. But the merely logical point of view is superficial. It is a mode of criticism, not a mode of creation. In history and daily life men are urged to think, feel, and act from a variety of needs few of which are logical, though logic as criticism is invaluable in clarifying material provided and in guiding creative impulses. We must judge arguments for God's existence somewhat less by their logical forms than by the part they play in human history. Symptoms slight in themselves often indicate circumstances of importance. Arguments for God's existence may be symptoms of our groping, experimental attempt to apprehend better and to commune intellectually as well as devotionally with the ultimate reality that they vaguely adumbrate.

The second objection that might be brought against Kant's treatment of regulative ideas concerns his epistemology. An exaggerated dualism accounts for his hopeless division of phenomena and noumena, and for his discouraging, almost defeatist, view of the relation of thought to reality. In this, as his voluminous writings prove, there is much to be said on his behalf. We are prone to hypostatize abstractions, to confound facts and fancies, to forget the limitations of our experience, and, worst of all, to leave untried our will to use it. There is undoubtedly a discrepancy, brought out

⁸ *Critique of Judgment*, pp. 418-19.

in his attack on the ontological argument, between our thoughts and their objects, which makes us aware of our inadequacy amid the mysteries around us. That ought to evoke a practical scepticism, subjectivism, dualism; but it need not logically, and (to safeguard a buoyancy of spirit necessary to human welfare) it ought not morally, lead to the dissolution of an ultimate realistic faith. If we must think in a certain way (and naturally we look for our standard not in pathological cases but in the best men and women we know), if we must think in a certain way, we must assume that that is a way to reality. To call ideas but regulative arouses questionings about them. Time, space, and the categories of the understanding Kant accepted because he believed that they must be presupposed to account for the possibility of science—the limited, mechanical, mathematical, Newtonian science of his day, which he called “knowledge.” As far as the ideas of speculative reason and the postulates of practical reason are necessary presuppositions of logical, religious, and ethical experience, and as far as such experience is on a par with science, those ideas and postulates should, we might suppose, be on an equal footing with the categories of the understanding. That footing may be precarious; the ideas and the postulates Kant may have formulated badly; and moral and religious experience may be deeper and more fundamental than science. Whether that be so or not is irrelevant to the particular point that what we must think—and who has answered Pilate’s question?⁹—puts us in contact, no matter how little, with reality. The more arguments for God’s existence express the complete nature of man, and are not merely logical or theological exercises, the nearer they are to reality. To call this anthropomorphism, though true, is idle. An alternative that puts something other than man, like time or “matter,” above him, thus depreciating his “level” of consciousness, instead of viewing all else in the light of that highest and most comprehensive known level of reality (under God), is less than anthropomorphic.

If there was anything that Kant thought could be used as a *προῦ στῶ* it was freedom and conscience, or the moral law. “Sir,” said Dr. Johnson, “we *know* our will is free, and there’s an end on’t.” Dr. Johnson was not inhibited by metaphysical conventions,

⁹ “Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?” John xviii. 38.

but his conviction of freedom could not have surpassed Kant's. The proclamations of immediate experience usually have little weight in philosophy. Literature, other arts, and religion have developed techniques for conveying immediate experience, for making it contagious. Philosophy steels itself against it; mutters, "It may be false. How can one prove it to anyone else?" As far as logic is concerned, Kant abandoned (or went beyond) it when he turned from speculative to practical reason. Not practice but theory has to postulate freedom. Practice plunges ahead, as James Ward wrote, "like Bergson's *élan vital* . . . with no postulate at all, only the impulse of self-conservation as a *vis a tergo* behind it."¹⁰ In appealing to his and to our immediate experience, in speaking only for those who have ears to hear, Kant ceases to be a philosopher in the academic sense of the term and becomes a prophet. His notorious architectonic, wooden and overelaborate as it is, nevertheless suits the first *Critique*. But the application of the same logical machinery to the second *Critique* not merely complicates the exposition of his thought but checks and diverts its free flow, so incompatible are the functions of critic and seer.

The moral law is the *ratio cognoscendi* of freedom, and freedom the *ratio essendi* of the moral law.¹¹ Because the moral law is, for Kant as for Dr. Johnson, a self-evident fact, whatever is necessary to account for its existence must be equally real. As duty commands with a categorical imperative, we must be free to obey it; we must somehow transcend the motives and the mechanical determinism of phenomena; we must be in some sense noumenal. Kant was so firmly convinced of this that, as Pringle-Pattison perceived, duty and freedom for him are "not so much two facts, one of which is inferred from the other, as two ways of characterizing the same experience."¹² Practical reason finds in rational beings acting in accordance with the moral law freedom, unconditioned teleology, and a noumenal source of both. It extends the employment of reason beyond speculative bounds. How it can so act, as it were, without knowledge, how it can be practical without being speculative, Kant does not show. His faculty psychology, in which

¹⁰ *A Study of Kant* (Cambridge, 1922), p. 179.

¹¹ *Kant's Critique of Practical Reason and Other Works on the Theory of Ethics*, tr. by T. K. Abbott (London, 1927), p. 88n.

¹² *The Idea of God in the Light of Recent Philosophy* (Oxford, 1917), p. 32.

will was not merely distinguishable from, but other than, cognition, prevented this, despite his hostility to the idea of conscience as an emotional, non-rational moral sense. He admits, while struggling after explanations, that we cannot understand how we are free, or what the relations are between the sensible and the intelligible self and between the phenomenal and the noumenal realms. He holds to his formulation of the moral law not on the testimony of experience (which he scorns as not apodeictic) but as a dictate of reason, while admitting that theoretical reason cannot itself establish that position.¹³ But "reason" is here a misleading term. Kant holds his position about the moral law not because it is clearly worked out, verifiable, and easily communicable, but as a demand of his inmost being, as a spiritual affirmation. For him the voice of duty was not merely the supreme revelation of noumenal reality, of "the heart of things"; on the whole, it was his only revelation.

Whatever may be our opinion about conscience and duty, probably one twofold Kantian element lingers in it: we feel that the voice of duty is (in Dr. C. C. J. Webb's words rather than Kant's) both ultimate and intimate. We may be slow in discovering our duty, but once we recognize it we recognize it as, for us at least, ultimately, unquestionably right. Greek philosophy and the *Aufklärung* believed, generally speaking, that if we knew what was good we should do it. This is plausible as long as the good is something not too difficult to be realized, something moderate and humane. The "right," however, introduces new elements, religious and other-worldly, as well as rationalistic ideals of universality and perfection. If the two can be distinguished, the right seems to be more difficult to attain than the good. Ordinary experience has usually supported Christianity against intellectualism, in assuming that we often fail to do our known duty, fail even to seek our known good. Kant tries to explain this by his principle of Radical Evil, but ends, as he is quite aware, by thus adding one more thing to be explained. The experience of remorse, however, when we fail to do what we ought, seems to indicate that we could have done it had we "been ourselves." In disobeying conscience we feel—though Kant dwells on this no more than Spinoza—not only that

¹³ Abbott, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-5.

we have committed something heedless, imprudent, or cowardly, but that we have betrayed our own true nature. In other words, the experience of remorse would seem to indicate that we have identified ourselves with the voice of conscience, with the moral law at first so difficult to discover and then so indifferent to our comfort, so "other" and "beyond" ourselves. Through the performance of duty we become at one with ultimate reality, "whose service is perfect freedom." Intimacy and ultimacy are so characteristic of religion that we are likely to find it where they converge.¹⁴

Because His will is in unison with the moral law, God, Kant ventures to assert, is not subject to the categorical imperative.¹⁵ But we are swayed by all sorts of base, individual passions. Kant has been often assailed for disregarding the beauty of holiness. He is accused of making duty and virtue repellent. "In the higher regions of morality, as the poet Schiller eloquently urged, the sharp contrast between inclination and duty, law and freedom, becomes more and more obscured. Not inclination and duty, but *inclination to duty, is the ideal constitution of man.*"¹⁶ Despite the fact that only one person has ever created (and for only a fraction of mankind) an overwhelming impression of sinlessness; despite the fact that that person prayed, until "his sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground," that his will might be at one with his Father's: we are assured that "everyone has known those characters from whose life every trace of discord and obstruction has been removed, for whom duty has become a pleasant task. Such characters are indeed the ripest fruit, as Emerson thought, of moral discipline. 'When we see a soul whose acts are regal, graceful and pleasant as roses, we must thank God that such things can be and are, and not turn sourly on the angel and say, Crump is the better man, with his grunting resistance to all his native devils.' "¹⁷

Kant as well as anyone else would prefer to entertain angels, aware or unaware, instead of having to hear Crump grunt. But the very fact that one must invoke an *angelus ex machina* proves the soundness of Kant's contention ("nur mit ein bisschen andern

¹⁴ cf. C. C. J. Webb, "The Nature of Religious Experience," *Hibbert Journal*, October 1933.

¹⁵ Abbott, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

¹⁶ *Immanuel Kant*, ed. by E. C. Wilm (New Haven, 1925), p. 34.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 34.

Worten") that most men are more like St. Augustine than like Christ; that pleasure is more seductive than spiritually invigorating; and that there is generally something aloof and awesome about the "solemn majesty" of duty. The only moral ground for obeying the categorical imperative, Kant insists, is pure respect. The moral law speaks not (he might add "at all," and we "only") with the voice of the past nor with the voice of the community. It speaks (according to his central position) in its own right. It can so speak, we judge from the tenor of relevant sections of the *Opus Postumum*, because the will of God and the categorical imperative are so indistinguishable that one may say that the voice of conscience was for Kant as near as anything could be to the voice of God.¹⁸

¹⁸ cf. "Der kategorische Imperativ und das darauf gegründete (Betrachten) aller Menschenpflichten als göttlicher Gebote ist der praktische Beweis vom Dasein Gottes.' . . . 'Es ist Ein Gott, Eine Welt und Ein in der Vernunft moralisch gebietendes Prinzip (Pflichtgesetz für den Menschen) in der Welt.' . . . 'Es ist Ein Gott der alles weiss kann und hat und von dem die blosse Idee ein moralisch-praktisches Postulat und kein leerer Begriff ist, ohne ihn als Substanz zu kennen.' . . . 'Da Weisheit, in strikter Bedeutung, nur Gott beigelegt werden kann und ein solches Wesen zugleich mit aller Macht begabt sein muss; weil ohne diese der Endzweck (das höchste Gut) eine Idee ohne Realität sein würde; so wird der Satz: es ist ein Gott ein Existentialsatz.' . . . 'Der Satz: es ist ein Gott, ist eine notwendige Hypothese der reinen praktischen Vernunft. Er ist auch der höchste Grundsatz der Transzentalphilosophie.' . . . 'Der kategorische Imperativ im Prinzip der Pflicht . . . ist die Idee von Gott. Gott ist das Wesen, welches das reale Prinzip alles Pflichtbegriffes in sich enthält.' . . . 'Es ist ein Gott. Denn es ist eine Macht die aber auch eine Verbindlichkeit für das Ganze vernünftiger Wesen bei sich führt.'

"In den Stellen, die wir in diesem Paragraphen kennen lernten, spricht Kant nicht als Mann der strengen Wissenschaft, als konsequenter Transzentalphilosoph, sondern als Mensch, als gläubiger Theist, der zwar keine übernatürliche Offenbarung anerkennt und sich keinen Dogmen irgendeiner Religions—oder Konfessionsgemeinschaft unterwirft, der sich aber aus innerm Drange heraus, vor allem mit Rücksicht auf die Bedürfnisse des moralischen Handelns, autonom zum Glauben an einen persönlichen Gott bekennen" (Erich Adickes, *Kants Opus Postumum* [Berlin, 1920], pp. 782-3).

cf. also: "Die Wissenschaft kann also mit Gott als einem Gedankending auskommen, das von unserm Geist geschaffen und in ihm mächtig ist, dem aber nicht auch noch eine Substanz ausser ihm entspricht. . . .

"So die Transzentalphilosophie mit der ihr notwendigen Selbstkritik und der daraus folgenden Selbstbescheidung.

"Anders der moralisch eingestellte einzelne Mensch: für ihn ist es eine Selbstverständlichkeit, den kategorischen Imperativ als Stimme Gottes im Menschen aufzufassen. Er erlebt in ihm unmittelbar seinen Gott als Gesetzgeber und Richter und kommt so durch *innern Zwang* auf dem Wege persönlichen Glaubens zu der festen Ueberzeugung von dem transsubjektiven Dasein Gottes. Auf S. 776, 805, 807 lernten wir eine Anzahl von Aeusserungen . . . kennen, aus denen ein solches ganz persönliches Erleben Kants und eine darauf sich gründende Glaubensgewissheit spricht" (*ibid.*, pp. 810-11).

Today's interest in Kierkegaard and Karl Barth reflects in part the craving of religious consciousness for a transcendent God, for "otherness" and ultimacy. The blank otherness and ultimacy of deism, however, does not satisfy it, as it did not satisfy Kant. Immanence and intimacy are needed too. Kant is usually judged, and rightly, by the work of his prime. But the philosophical form of his publications during those years was not the most suitable one in which to express religious convictions or private opinions. In old age or in notes written for oneself characteristic ideas often appear not only in confused disintegration but in sharper relief. Kant's *Opus Postumum* illustrates such deficiencies and advantages. It is not coordinated enough to warrant a systematic and indisputable exposition of his last thoughts. But it does show dissatisfaction with the moral argument of the second *Critique*, and a strong tendency to emphasize God's personality and immanence in the human spirit. Without questioning His objective existence and otherness, except when clumsily conceived as an external substance, Kant tries to think of Him as also within us, not as a figment of our imagination (though we to some extent fashion our ideas of Him), but as a necessary, inescapable idea and as the core of our rational and moral being.¹⁰ If Kant's philosophy of religion does not culminate in unequivocally identifying the voice of conscience with the voice of God, it is because he dreaded the corruption of morality by religious obscurantism and the corruption of religion by *Schwärmerei*. The voice of God is not heard apart from reason and morality; yet God Himself is so incommensurable with all else that, though we come to Him through experience, no experience of ours is sufficient to hold or to lose Him. Kant did not put it thus, but his own example prompts such a formulation; for when he realized the inadequacy of basing faith entirely on practical postulates from moral experience, his belief in God remained as sure as ever.

Because I ought, I can, Kant argued. But I can't now, he added, thus making immortality irrefutable. If holiness cannot be acquired here and now, if reason and passion are irrevocably opposed, if our only guesses about the world to come may be based on prolonging

¹⁰ *Kants Opus Postumum, passim* from p. 769 to p. 846, especially pp. 789, 791, 793, 800-2, 819, 823. cf. Norman Kemp Smith, *Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'* (London, 1923), Appendix C.

the lines we draw in this life, it is hard to see how a *progressus ad infinitum*, a progress to nowhere, a process intrinsically valueless at any point in its course, can be especially interesting. Indeed, immortality was not one of Kant's chief concerns. He always treated that postulate of practical reason as more inferential than freedom and the moral law. The Old Testament also makes immortality secondary to ethics and (which Kant overlooked) to God. Time, mechanism, the individual, and morality, about those Kant was as strong as he was weak about eternity, quality, the social, and the mystical.²⁰ Believers in "the life everlasting" are frequently chided for a *mañana* attitude. They in turn chide their contemners for the fret and the strain of trying, faster than time, to do more than can be done. Fullness of life rather than time seems to us today more than it apparently did to Kant to be the gist of the matter. According to the quality of our lives and those of others, we desire immortality rather than an end to their and our labors. The right perspective for time is within the compass of eternity, within the plenitude of God. Creatures of duration and imperfection, Christianity tells us, we feed on Him. Parasites we might call ourselves, were not "sons" preferable. Blessed and ever to be blessed, life is not mere succession but an ever richer, social as well as individual apprehension of God. Many starting with the joy of mere living fall under illness and misery. Others find, regardless of circumstances, a zest and radiance that they call God. In Him, they say, and in "the communion of saints," is true life. How we live now or later depends on how we associate all we know, love, suffer, and do, with Him.²¹ Conceptions of immortality apart from religious content are jejune. With such content they are too particular for philosophy to deal with.

As Kant inferred immortality as a prerequisite for the fulfilment of the moral law, so he inferred God as the guarantor of the *summum bonum*, as the means of uniting virtue with propor-

²⁰ Awe, appreciation, contemplation, communion—things that mystics look for in intercourse with God—Kant finds in obedience to the moral law. Hence he thinks of prayer not as continual communion with God, which he deems absurd, but as "a devout and godly disposition" conducive to morality. The difference is chiefly in emphasis, moral rather than religious, but in the end probably more mystical than Kant would care to acknowledge. cf. *Lectures on Ethics*, pp. 99, 102, 104, 105; and *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, p. 183.

²¹ cf. F. von Hugel, *The Mystical Element of Religion* (London, 1923), Vol. II, p. 167.

tionate happiness.²² To need happiness, to deserve it, and yet never to enjoy it, seemed to him irrational. For the Epicureans, what leads to happiness is virtuous; for the Stoics, virtue aware of itself is happiness. But Kant found no inevitable connection between virtue and happiness.²³ While admitting a sort of intellectual moral contentment, a kind of non-sensuous, ethical bliss in the performance of duty, of which cheerfulness is an appropriate expression, he believed that happiness, like pleasure, is fundamentally sensuous. But moral more than psychological considerations led him to distinguish happiness and virtue as keenly as he could. Virtue is good in itself; happiness is good only on condition of virtue. To make happiness an incentive to virtue would turn Kant's ethics upside down. Though virtue is the supreme good, it is not the whole good; for the whole good, the *summum bonum*, includes happiness. But as happiness belongs to the world of sense, and virtue, like freedom, to the intelligible and the teleological world, the source, sustainer, and governor of both worlds, God, is needed to blend happiness and virtue in proper proportions.

Many for whom Kant's method of inference here has no appeal sympathize with his underlying intention. In the *Opus Postumum* he virtually dropped the *summum bonum*, as introducing a discordant note in his ethics; and he corrected the externality of much of his previous reasoning by, in effect, identifying, as noticed above, the voice of conscience with the voice of God, thus representing God not as a means to an end, a dispenser of happiness, but as an end in Himself, in fact the ultimate and only self-subsistent end. Kant's sympathizers find in him at least two strong points. The first is the autonomy of morality on its own level. The second is that God, though not "interfering" with morality any more than with science, provides the "is" without which "ought" would be an illusion.²⁴ If truth, goodness, and beauty (the lay Trinity) do

²² "This moral argument"—like the argument for immortality—"does not supply any *objectively valid* proof of the Being of God; it does not prove to the sceptic that there is a God, but proves that if he wishes to think in a way consonant with morality, he must admit the *assumption* of this proposition under the maxims of his practical Reason.—We should, therefore, not say: it is necessary for *morals*, to assume the happiness of all rational beings of the world in proportion to their morality; but rather, this is necessitated by morality. Accordingly, this is a *subjective* argument sufficient for moral beings" (Bernard, *op. cit.*, p. 381 n.). cf. *ibid.*, pp. 389, 393.

²³ Abbott, *op. cit.*, pp. 207 ff.

²⁴ cf. Bernard, *op. cit.*, p. 384, and *Lectures on Ethics*, pp. 80-2.

not manifest ultimate reality, conscience, as Dr. Webb remarks in *Kant's Philosophy of Religion*, is a voice crying in the wilderness.

Religion, Kant used to say, is morality applied to God.²⁵ Though morality is not religion, religion consists, according to him, in the recognition of our duties as divine commands. Duty is pure obedience to the moral law for its own sake, but a religious person so identifies the moral law with the will of God that he cannot think of the one apart from the other. Reason and morality, not historical revelation, Kant affirms, should form the foundation of religion; for an historical revelation is the preserve of antiquarians and exegetes, whereas the natural religion of reason and morality is open to all men.

The distinction between natural and revealed religion developed at the end of the twelfth century in the encounter between Aristotelianism and Christianity. Before then (and afterwards, in some schools) nature and reason pointed to and culminated in supernature and faith. After the twelfth century the unhappy and often artificial division grew ever deeper between natural and revealed religion, philosophy and theology—a division accounting for much of the dualism pervading Kant's thought and for much of the present friction between religion and science. What the religion of reason has stood for, though, has varied incessantly. The natural religion that Kant espoused was on the whole that of his day. While admitting the derivation of natural or rational religion from historic religions, he looks upon history largely as a means of illustrating moral and logical truths, as a kind of magnificent parable. He grants that an historic example of, say, fortitude will show the feasibility of that virtue, but he does not approach Christianity as an especially vivid revelation of God in an historic person in an historic society. He inclines to neglect the church for the sake of religion, and to magnify the individual at the expense of society. But his failure to be ahead of his time in these respects can hardly be held against him nor does it seriously injure the worth of his analysis of religion from the restricted but penetrating point of view of morality.

Most of the things that he attacked in religion are now still attacked or else tacitly rejected. Meaningless sacrifices, for ex-

²⁵ *Lectures on Ethics*, p. 79.

ample, fanaticism, superstition, blind authoritarianism, fetish-faith, merely mechanical means of grace—few today would defend these against Kant.²⁶ His procedure, especially in *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, somewhat resembles that of a “modernist.” Confining himself almost exclusively to Christianity, he treats doctrines and facts as largely figurative and symbolical. He hunts for their moral value and validity rather than for their scientific truth and objective existence. In using the Bible and the creeds as material for reason and morality to work on, in supposing that some rather than all of man’s normative spiritual insight has been crystallized in them, Kant anticipates a point of view represented in the recent report of the Commission on Christian Doctrine appointed by the archbishops of Canterbury and York. Though the report presents current Anglican tenets without passing on their character, it is noteworthy that today a Kantian accent on the supremacy of reason and morality in matters of religion echoes through one of the great churches of the world. As the report has met no official condemnation, one may surmise that belief in miracles is no longer essential in the Church of England. At least it is now belatedly conceded that members of that church often reject such belief, in whole or in part, without detriment to the doctrine of the Incarnation, or at any rate to their good standing in their parishes. One may suspect, though, that the ideas about miracles, morality, and reason, of the eminent members of the Commission differ from Kant’s. One may suspect also that they find in tradition and the church not only a “fetter”²⁷ but a desirable training ground and a precious touchstone, since what goes under the name of reason and morality at a later date is not invariably better than what preceded it under the same or a different name.

Perhaps the main weakness of Kant’s philosophy of religion is that it is not that but a moral philosophy. It never seems to occur to him that there is a specifically religious experience, a part of which is what Otto called “the numinous.” He develops only the moral side of man in harmony with God. The temple of Karnak, the Parthenon, the cathedral at Chartres; religious painting, sculpture, poetry, music, and charity—Kantian religion is not

²⁶ *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, pp. 157, 162, 167, 181, 182.

²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 112.

sufficiently fertile and generous to welcome these. It waters down saints and prophets into ethical culture leaders. Its emphasis on reason and morality as the essence of advanced religion, or of religion for the philosopher, unconsciously tends to engulf religion as a whole, making it hard, on that hypothesis, to understand how—immediate experience of the Divine being ignored—religion can flourish where abstract thought and moral inspiration are weak, and how it often falters where discursive reason and politeness reign.

Though there is probably an abiding difference between reason and faith, it is now widely held that Kant's distinction between speculative and practical reason is not so illuminating as it might have been. Experience is conative, sensational, instinctive, and affective, as well as cognitive and speculative. Our whole experience must guide us, and not any one part alone, be it science, morality, or religion. Among animals (and in us as far as we are animals) emotion and instinct seem to be surer means of access to reality than is thought. Our awareness of others, our response to them as to persons rather than as to things, which appears before we leave our cradles, must be more an immediate experience than a process of inference. To grasp the unity and the purpose of nature, Kant observes, gives us pleasure. Simply to understand nature according to the categories, he supposes, must once have been pleasurable, though custom has staled it.²⁸ All this—like the fact that nature satisfies both artist and scientist; that "*der bestirnte Himmel über mir und das moralische Gesetz in mir*" filled Kant with the same sort of awe—suggests greater coalescence between speculative and practical reason than he usually admitted.

Von Hügel describes Kant's speculative reason as understanding from without, quantitative, superficial, scarcely accompanied by emotion, easily transferable—the action of but part of our personality. He describes practical reason as understanding from within, qualitative, deep reason accompanied by deep emotion, not easily transferable to others—the functioning of our personality as a whole. Speculative reason expresses itself chiefly in science and criticism; practical reason in appreciation, creation, spiritual affirmation. A "fruitful tension" prevails between them, stimulat-

²⁸ Bernard, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-9.

ng or agonizing according to the individual. Speculative reason, he declares, cannot explain away data it receives from other sources, without explaining away also its own function and existence. Practical reason must be constantly purified and disciplined by speculative reason; and personality and freedom, by the impersonal and the determined.²⁹

How can this be? What are conscience and religious experience? What do they command and reveal? For philosophy questions like these are hydra heads. Thought and words need the reinforcement of trial and practice, the extension of past experience through present experiment. Kant sought to teach his students not philosophy but how to philosophize. More than knowledge, he wished them wisdom and faith to grow through doubt.

²⁹ *The Mystical Element of Religion*, Vol. II, p. 43.

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